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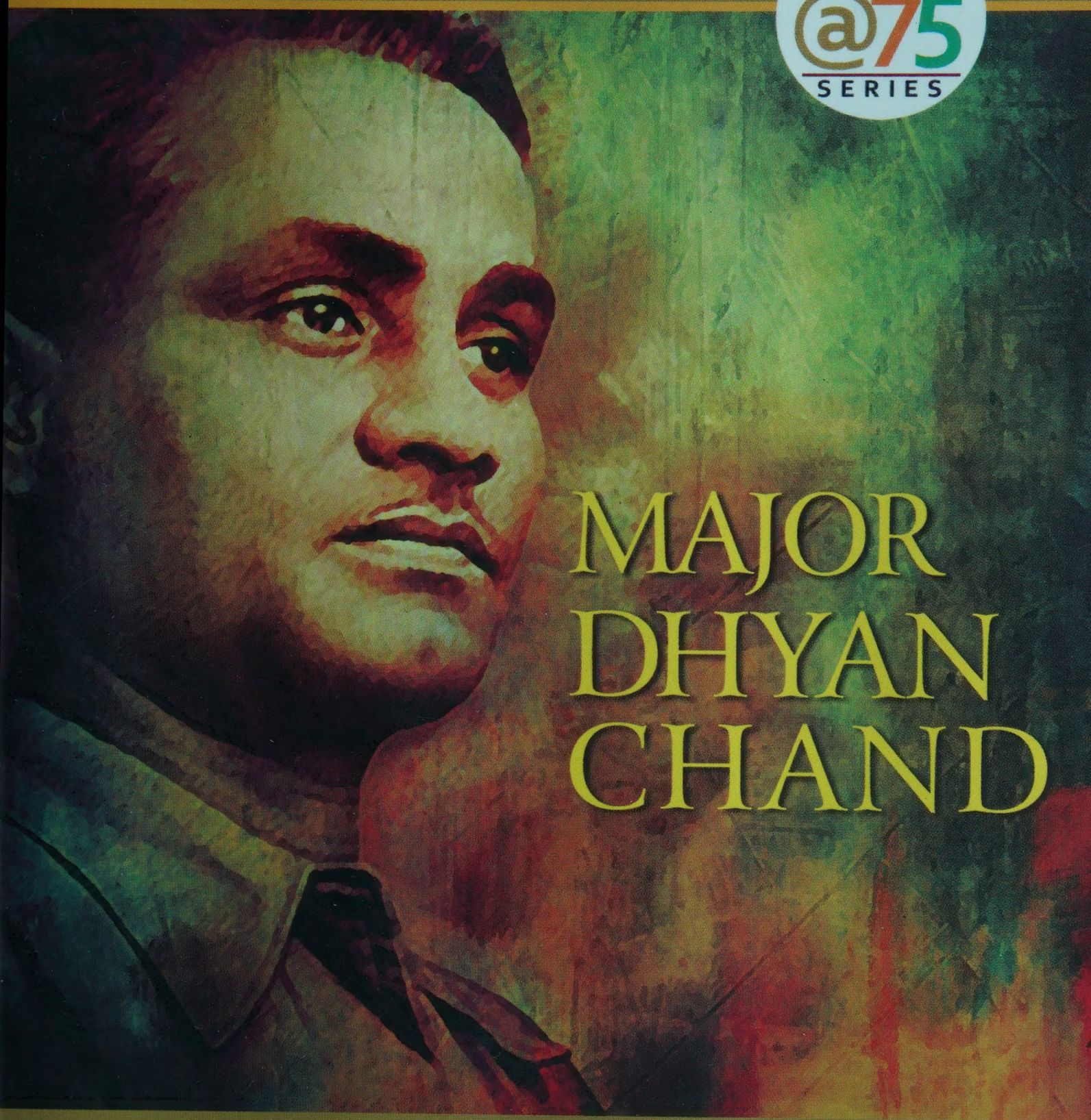
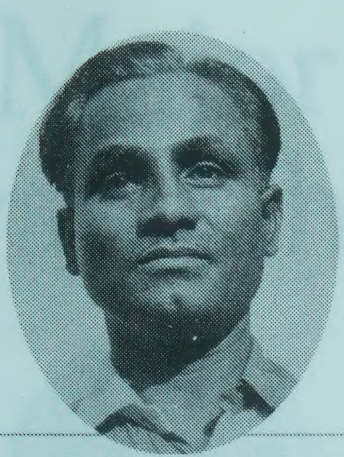


MAJOR DHYAN CHAND

SANJAY DUDHANE

Major Dhyan Chand (1905 - 1979), a hockey player who is regarded as one of the greatest players of all time. Known as the 'Hockey Wizard' or 'the Magician of hockey', he had goal-scoring feats and dribbling skills, which made India win three consecutive Gold medals in Hockey at the Olympic Games of 1928, 1932 and 1936. He is the recipient of many honours including Padma Bhushan. His birthday, 29 August, is celebrated as National Sports Day in India. This book gives glimpses of the life of Major who strove for the glory of his country and by whose name Indian hockey is known for. The Khel Ratna award is also named after him.



Major Dhyan Chand

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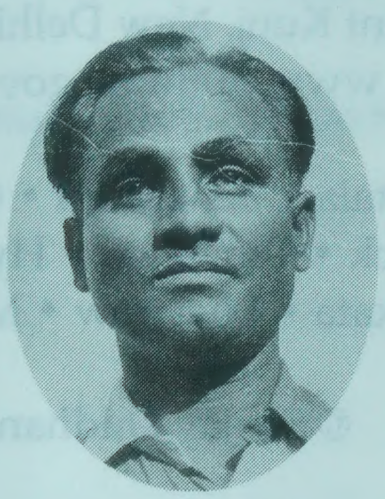

Sanjay Dudhane

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Photo courtesy : Late Babu Nimal family, a 1936 Olympic gold medalist hockey player from Pune.

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To My Son Vedant

&

All 184 Olympic Medal winners of India

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Preface

While I was in school, there was a lesson in our textbook about Major Dhyan Chand's unprecedented marvels in hockey. Its title was 'The Magician of Hockey.' While reading this article, I would wonder how one man could score nearly one thousand goals in field hockey. Later on, I was encouraged to read and study about the Olympic Games. Luckily for me, while I was doing my graduation, I met and got acquainted with Mr. Babu Nimal, one of the 'miracle men' of Major Dhyan Chand's 'Berlin Band.' He used to narrate many interesting anecdotes about Dhyan Chand's prowess. He used to narrate the golden history of the 1936 Berlin Olympics' triumph graphically. I would listen to him spellbound; gradually the idea of writing the biography of this great

son of India – Major Dhyan Chand – seeped into my mind and got firmly implanted there.

Major Dhyan Chand's birthday, 29 August, is now celebrated every year as the 'National Sports Day'. In order to express our gratitude to Dhyan Chand, I wrote articles about his glorious era in hockey in some leading dailies like 'Lokmat' and 'Pudhari' while working as a sports journalist. But due to time constraints, I was unable to start writing his biography. However in 2010, I made up my mind and resolved to devote as much of my time as I could to finish this task. After tenacious efforts of eight months, I was able to give final touches to his biography.

The World Cup Hockey tournament was held at Delhi in March 2010. I was the sole Marathi Sports correspondent to cover this wonderful event. The entire tournament was played in the arena of Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium. During those two weeks, whenever I would go to the stadium to watch matches, my feet would involuntarily turn towards the inspiring statue of Major Dhyan Chand located at the entrance and I would bow my head in reverence to this great stalwart. Witnessing this tournament, I got more enthusiastic and succeeded in completing his biography before his next birth anniversary.

It now gives me immense pleasure in presenting this biography in English. Major Dhyan Chand is aptly called 'the Father of our National Sport'. His biography

is an inspiration to every Indian citizen. The book is a chronicle of Indian Hockey too.

If we once again start encouraging our hockey players by holding hockey-tournaments regularly in every nook and corner of our country, the glorious biography of Major Dhyan Chand will certainly prove to be the beacon for our youngsters and light the flame of love for hockey in their minds. Following in his footsteps will certainly be instrumental in regaining the lost glory of Indian hockey.

Prof. Sanjay Dudhane

1 INDIAN SUN RISES IN THE WEST

The 1936 Olympic Games were granted to Berlin before the Nazis came to power, but then it was a good opportunity for Hitler to demonstrate to the world, how efficient the Nazi Germany was. It was also a good chance for the Nazis to prove to the world the supremacy of their 'Master Race'. It was a perfect scenario to show off Germany's might to the world as 49 countries were competing and bringing with them their assorted media.

They were, therefore, greatly elated when their hockey players had beaten India, the reigning world champions, in the practice match. Perhaps, they were unaware that it might be a mere subterfuge! The high-headed Germans did not even bother to take cognizance

of Indian Hockey team's victories in the league matches where they defeated Hungary by 4-0, U.S.A. by 7-0, Japan by 9-0 and France by 10-0 in the semis!

And, then came the D-day of the final match for the gold medal. It was scheduled on 14 August, just after the 'Bronze Medal' match. But due to incessant rains the final match was postponed to the following morning of 15 August.

There was tremendous pressure on the Indian hockey team. From 1928 to 1936 they were representing 'British India' under the 'Star of India' flag designed for them. However, it did not inspire them at all.

The day of 15 August dawned. The Indian players were still under a cloud of self-doubt and a negative mindset. Their manager Pankaj Gupta was worried as to how he can raise the morale of his players. Then suddenly an idea came to his mind. While coming to Berlin, he had brought with him a 'Tricolour' flag of the Indian National Congress, which was then spearheading India's struggle for freedom from the British rule.

When all the Indian players huddled in the dressing room prior to the match, the manager silently took out the Tricolour. Holding it before the players, he said, "You know what this flag means to all our Indian brothers. This represents the aspiration of our nation and also proclaims that though today we are in slavery of a foreign country, we are really great

people belonging to the most ancient and glorious civilisation. Now, let us uphold its pride and show these Nazis how we are superior to them!"

His words proved to be an elixir. All the players were filled with pride and love for their country. They became eager to trounce the Germans.

On the other hand, 40000 spectators thronged Hockey Station field located near the main Olympic stadium at Reichsport field, eager to see their German players win the Gold Medal by defeating the team of British India.

But as the match progressed they went silent and speechless. They were unable to believe their own eyes, witnessing how easily India's Captain Dhyan Chand and his teammates were scoring goal after goal. This made Germany's aggressive goalkeeper Tito Warnholtz frustrated. In a fit of anger, he deliberately collided with Dhyan Chand and made him lose a tooth.

Returning to the field after his first-aid, a more determined Dhyan Chand told his colleagues to 'teach these Germans a fitting lesson.' India then went on to trounce Germany by 8-1 and thus achieved the singular distinction of winning three consecutive hockey finals of the Olympic Games—a real 'Hat-trick' indeed!

It was 15 August 1936. Dhyan Chand, his teammates, and the whole world, did not anticipate that this day was going to be the most special day for India since it was to become a free nation exactly on this day eleven years later. Then the same 'Tricolour,' that was saluted by the

Indian hockey players before going for the final match, would be proudly unfurled as India's National Flag!

The Fuhrer of Germany, Adolf Hitler, was awestruck by the Indian team's victory over his players. He was mesmerised by the speed and elegance of India's Captain Dhyan Chand. He was impressed by Dhyan Chand's unbelievable skill that he even requested him to become a German Citizen. But Dhyan Chand humbly declined this offer, since he had resolved to serve his 'motherland' to his last breath.

By then, Dhyan Chand had not only mesmerised Hitler but also the whole world. Dhyan Chand had become a household name for hockey lovers. He had taken the game of hockey to the Olympian height and yet this humble gentleman was fully devoted to his motherland and always tried his best to keep India's glorious flag flying high.

This is the inspiring story of a great man, Major Dhyan Chand—The Magician of Hockey.

Prayaag, a tinsel town near Allahabad on the banks of the holy river Ganges in North India, had many 'Rajput' families. The Rajputs were a warrior clan for many centuries, so it was but natural for their families to dream and have at least one of their sons as a soldier in the British Indian Army. Moreover, these people did not have any land to cultivate, and hence, the Rajput boys willingly accepted a job in the armed forces as the only available means of livelihood.

The 'Bais' family was one of them. Someshwar Singh Bais had joined the Indian Army and had progressed to the rank of Subedar. He was married to Shyama Devi. Due to frequent transfers, the family had to move from place to place. They named their first-born Mul Singh. On 29 August 1905, Shyama Devi gave birth to their second son, whom they named Dhyan Singh. Thereafter, their third son Roop Singh was born, followed by four daughters—Indu, Ramkumari, Ramkali and Surya. The proud parents loved and adored their seven children equally.

Someshwar Singh was tall and sturdy, had piercing eyes and graceful moustache. He was honest and diligent and had won many rewards and medals. He was looked at with due respect and awe in the army for his diligence and discipline. Though he was a strict disciplinarian, he was a loving and caring father at home. He always wished his sons to succeed him in much better ways. But it was becoming difficult for him to run his household of nine people with a very limited salary. Hence, he managed to get a job in the army for his eldest son Mul Singh when he turned fifteen. Mul Singh not only maintained the family tradition of joining the army but also helped run the household more smoothly. Someshwar Singh's second son, Dhyan Singh was very active from the beginning. He would always keep himself busy running around.

There was a great apathy towards formal education in those days. It was thought to be of no great importance.

Hence, nobody from Someshwar Singh's family went to school for longer time. Moreover, his frequent transfers used to hinder his children's continuous education. Dhyan Singh somehow studied up to sixth standard, but thereafter, he gradually lost interest in education and left school.

Dhyan Singh along with his elder brother Mul Singh used to go to watch the wrestling bouts. At that time there were many *Akhadas* (arenas) for wrestling all over Allahabad. The rich people fondly allowed the *Pahelwans* to practise in their spacious courtyards. On seeing the strong and muscular wrestlers, Dhyan Singh always wished to become like them. He liked to see the wrestlers sweating it out in the red soil of the *akhada*. Sometimes he himself would go in the *akhada* to practise wrestling with friends. Gama was the most famous wrestler of that time. He was known as the 'World Conqueror' and was worshipped like a deity by youngsters who revered Gama's photographs. However, Dhyan Singh's love for wrestling remained only at the level of being an ardent spectator.

However, by now, the love for sports had become integral part of his life. He was playing some or the other game every day. Being gifted with a strong physique like his father, he never used to get tired even after playing for hours together. He was always ahead of all other boys in the sprints.

Someshwar Singh was transferred from Allahabad to Jhansi. He was even given a small plot of land as a token of appreciation for his honest service by the army. He built a house there prior to his retirement and then settled there permanently.

During India's first armed war for Independence in 1857, the British had realised the strategic importance of Jhansi and hence, had established a major cantonment there. Hundreds of British soldiers and army officers stationed around had brought their British culture to Jhansi and would play games like cricket, badminton and hockey.

But to the Indian people, such field games were not at all known and Indian boys like Dhyan Singh watched the English soldiers playing these games with a sense of wonder. Dhyan Singh soon started copying those soldiers. He used to cut a curved twig of a tree, make a ball of rags and tried to play a hockey-like game. His greatest quality was his total devotion and concentration in any game he played. This helped him remain ahead of all his friends.

He was devoted to his mother and hence willingly and diligently helped her in household chores. While adopting a disciplinarian attitude from his father, young Dhyan Singh imbibed virtues like humanity and quietness from his mother. Though he could not get much formal education due to the frequent transfers

of his father, Dhyan Singh started excelling in various sports. His parents never forbade him from playing. He used to get very hungry after playing for hours on end, but his mother fondly fed him with her own loving hands. This helped him become strong and sturdy like his father.

In a way, Someshwar Singh's house was an ideal school to learn the best in Indian culture, where the children imbibed values like brotherhood, love, respect for elders, honesty, discipline and diligence from the acts and behaviour of their parents.

Dhyan Singh was much closer to his younger brother Roop Singh. They loved and respected each other and were always fondly compared with the most ideal pair of brothers Ram and Laxman.

In those days the children were not burdened with much education. They used to play with their total devotion and had healthy and nutritious food. On the basis of such well-built physique, many young boys would easily get jobs in the army. It was, therefore, natural for young Dhyan Singh to follow the example of his father and elder brother and join the Indian Army.

2 A MAGICIAN IN THE MAKING

Great persons are invariably involved in some interesting stories. Those stories often elaborate their greatness. There is a famous anecdote about Dhyan Singh's mastery over the game of hockey.

It is said that when Dhyan Singh was fourteen, he once went with his father to watch a hockey match between the teams of two British army wings. The match was being played on a ground adjacent to the central camp. Young Dhyan Singh was watching the match with total concentration. One team was lagging behind the rival team by two goals. Dhyan got agitated. He started thinking of entering the field to score the goals for the losing side. He expressed this desire to his father. But it was not possible and so Someshwar Singh ignored Dhyan's plea and asked him to keep quiet. But

Dhyan kept on making the same request saying, "If I get a chance, I would surely win this match for the losing team. Just get me a hockey-stick to play with them."

A British Officer, who was overhearing this dialogue between Someshwar Singh and his teenage son, took interest and in order to encourage Dhyan Singh, gave him permission to join the losing team. The English players noted the resolve of this youngster and did not object to his joining the match.

As soon as young Dhyan started playing, his hockey-stick started moving like thunder and by scoring four consecutive goals he really brought victory to the losing team! Everybody was stunned to see this magical feat of young Dhyan. They were highly impressed by the lightning speed with which he had scored four goals before anybody could even guess how he scored them! The English officers were much pleased with him and this feat not only earned him a place in the army but also helped him begin his glorious hockey career.

This anecdote about the great sportsman is often heard from many of his admirers and fans. Dhyan Singh got connected to hockey much before entering the army. While playing with his friends using the hockey-stick of a bent twig and a ball made from rags, he had become efficient in gaining control over the ball and scoring goals.

Following the steps of his father and elder brother, Dhyan Singh finally joined the British army after passing

the physical fitness test in 1922. He was enrolled as a 'Sepoy' in the first Brahmin Regiment in Delhi. Initially, he had to go through some rigorous training, including how to handle a rifle for shooting. In his spare time he would watch the friendly matches of hockey and football of his colleagues. He was greatly thrilled when he received his first pay of a few rupees at the end of the month. He had never dreamed that the reward for all his hard work would be so satisfactory.

His first Brahmin Regiment was well-known in hockey circles, since hockey was the only outdoor game to which the regiment devoted most of its sporting time. There was a Subedar Major named Bale Tiwari in this regiment who was a keen hockey enthusiast and a very fine player. He aimed at making the hockey team of his regiment the best and worked hard to achieve this goal. He keenly observed each new recruit and if he saw some spark and enthusiasm in any new Sepoy, he would give him a hockey-stick and start teaching him hockey himself.

One day Dhyan Singh came to his notice. He was much impressed by the way Dhyan Singh would stand for hours together engrossed in watching the game of hockey being played. He could feel Dhyan's genuine interest in the game, the sparkle of ambition in his eyes and also strong optimism. He went up to Dhyan Singh, gave him a hockey-stick and asked him to come every day on the field for practice.

This was a pleasant surprise for Dhyan Singh as if he met God in the form of Tiwari! He greatfully accepted Bale Tiwari as his coach and started taking lessons in hockey from him.

On the very first day of his training, Dhyan started playing his natural game. He was accustomed to keeping control over the ball by using the tactics at dribbling. He did the same thing now and after gaining control over the ball, took it by himself to the goal-post by dribbling. Bale Tiwari, who was watching Dhyan's play from a distance, got annoyed with these tactics. He called him and expressed his displeasure.

He said, "My dear boy, hockey is a game played collectively by a team. A player should never keep the ball to himself by continuous dribbling. The best way of playing hockey is to pass the ball correctly and at correct time to a fellow player. A player should never be selfish and he should remember that he can score goals only with the assistance of timely passes made by his fellow players. The credit of victory should always go to the whole team."

Each word of this sermon was deeply imprinted on Dhyan Singh's mind. He started obeying his Coach Bale Tiwari and quickly learned the nuances of hockey. He learned the important lesson of keen observation and concentration. Soon he became adept in many finer tricks of playing. He mastered the technique of scoring

goals by pushing the ball subtly through the gaps in the rival team instead of hitting it hard.

The time to play hockey was never fixed for the Brahmin Regiment at Delhi Cantonment. Subedar Major Tiwari would give a call any time for his players to come to the field with their hockey-sticks. The young sepoys had to follow a very disciplined and rigorous routine every day. The only pleasant respite from this gruelling routine was playing the hockey and giving their all on the field. Hence, they were always eager to go to the field to play their favourite game.

All their petty differences of caste and creed, rich and poor, younger or senior would dissolve the moment they started playing and an unbreakable bond of humanity and friendship tied them all together. Dhyan Singh was always eager and ready to go to the field for practice. Though he strictly followed the lessons of his Coach to play as a team, outside the field he preferred to keep to himself. He did not mix much with the other players of his regiment. This aloofness slowly became his temperament.

He was accurate in passing the ball to other players and very fast at dribbling it. With great diligence, he had evolved his own unique style of dribbling. One could see a magnificent form of dribbling once the ball came to Dhyan Singh's hockey-stick. The British army officers were greatly impressed by his style of playing

and always encouraged him. They were particularly impressed by his fighting spirit and dedication to the game.

Dhyan Singh was very active on the field. He was not an egoist and always respected suggestions of others. He was always eager to learn any new trick from anybody and would practise the new technique for hours together to gain mastery over it. Sometimes, he would practice all by himself, forgetting everything else. On becoming engrossed in practice, he would often forget his thirst or hunger. This total devotion helped him become a perfect hockey player.

Just within a year, an unbreakable bond was established between Dhyan Singh and the hockey-stick. That inanimate wooden object would become a part of his body and would come to life once he started playing with it. He would love his stick like a darling sibling. In turn, that hockey-stick changed the course of his life. It was a pleasure for everybody to see Dhyan Singh play hockey with full control.

By now he had mastered accurate placement and push-strokes along with marksmanship at the goal. He never kept the ball for long time to himself nor did he allow other players to indulge in such selfish tactics. He would get annoyed and rebuke the errant player, much to the amusement of his Coach Bale Tiwari, who had by then become the key figure in shaping Dhyan Singh as one of the finest players of hockey.

3 MAGIC IN THE MOONLIGHT

After a year-long rigorous training, Dhyan Singh, like a thirsty bird, was eagerly waiting for the annual military tournament along with all his teammates of the First Brahmin Regiment.

It was 1923. One day Subedar Major Bale Tiwari came to him and said, "You have been selected to play for our regiment in the annual military tournament in Delhi."

Dhyan Singh was instantly thrilled. This was to be the first big match for him. This annual tournament was considered highly important in military circles. Bale Tiwari said to all the players, "This is your chance to bring glory to our regiment by winning this tournament." He then assigned a position to each player. At last he said to Dhyan Singh, "You will be our 'Centre forward', you know what it means."

Dhyan Singh simply bowed to him in humility. He had realised the amount of responsibility his Coach had placed on his shoulders with so much faith. This realisation made him more resolute. As soon as the match started, Dhyan Singh's magic of playing, including his extraordinary skill of short and accurate passes, push-strokes, marking the weak link in the line of the opposing team's players, and his co-ordination with his teammates – everything started bearing fruit. The First Brahmin Regiment's hockey team established its dominance over other teams and went on to win the annual tournament. Dhyan Singh's brilliance was noticed by all the army officers and his position as the 'centre-forward' in the regiment team was permanently assured after this tournament. Dhyan Singh's team then marched ahead winning four consecutive annual military tournaments. His way of playing made everybody aware of his glorious future in the field of hockey.

When the First Brahmin Regiment was abolished, Dhyan Singh was posted in 2/14 Punjab Regiment in 1925. The venue of that year's annual military tournament was Jhelum. Dhyan Singh was asked to join the team of new Punjab Indian Infantry. But this team had been hastily assembled and so had no co-ordination among its players.

In one of the matches, the team was lagging behind by a margin of 0-2. Only four minutes were left for the

final whistle and Punjab regiment's defeat was almost certain. The chief of the regiment called Dhyan Singh and whispered gravely, "Come on, Dhyan, we are losing the match, do something." These words acted like a command of the general and Dhyan Singh was filled with new vigour and determination. As soon as he gained control over the ball, he dribbled the ball and brake through the defence of the opposing team. He scored the first goal for his team. Then the very next minute, he scored one more lightning goal. Now just one minute was left. Both teams were locked at 2-2. But to everybody's astonishment, Dhyan Singh scored the third goal in the last moment and brought victory to his team.

Dhyan Singh was not only applauded greatly even by his opponents but the British Army Officers honoured him by giving him the title 'Hockey Magician'. Everybody was awestruck by Dhyan Singh's unbelievable feat. Nobody had ever thought of the great upheaval caused by this typhoon called 'Dhyan Singh' in just four minutes. Punjab Regiment's victory after being almost on the brink of defeat now seemed a fairy tale. Dhyan Singh's name was on everybody's lips. Even the British newspapers took cognizance of Dhyan Singh's brilliance, and honoured him with the title of 'Hockey Magician'.

But all this adulation never went to Dhyan Singh's head. He knew that because he was a 'sepoy' in the

army first and he got the chance to play hockey. For him, duty came first; it had a priority over all other things, including hockey. So he returned to his barrack immediately after the tournament. Due to his devotion towards his duty, sometimes he did not get enough time to play. But he never complained about this to his senior officers, even after he was acknowledged as the best sportsperson of the country. He was so much in love with hockey that many times he would practise hockey in the moonlight! His colleagues would then hear the sound of Dhyan Singh's strokes and chuckled to themselves in their beds. Some senior officers would sometimes watch this wonderful sight of Dhyan Singh practicing hockey all alone in the moonlight.

One day Pankaj Gupta was greatly impressed by Dhyan Singh's nocturnal practice. He was so moved that he ran to Dhyan Singh and taking his hand firmly in his own hands said, "You are practicing hockey in the moonlight! Oh Dhyan Singh, you are actually the shining moon of Indian Hockey! From today you are not Dhyan Singh, but Dhyan Chand!"

Gupta was the second coach of Dhyan Singh. Once he started calling him 'Dhyan Chand', the others also followed the new nomenclature. Thus, Dhyan Singh's name was naturally changed to 'Dhyan Chand'. If 'Dhyan' means concentration, 'Chand' refers to the moon. Hence, Dhyan Chand became the Moon of Concentration in hockey.

The Year 1925 was a milestone for the Indian hockey. In this year a bright star named 'Dhyan Chand' started shining on the horizon of the sports world. Soon, the Indian Hockey Federation (IHF) was founded in Gwalior in 1926 and then the first Inter-Provincial hockey tournament was also arranged. Dhyan Chand proved his mastery in this tournament. His skillful play brought glory to hockey and made Indian people take keen interest in this wonderful game.

In those days, hockey was played in each and every British colony in Asia. It was also played in many European countries like France, Scotland, Greece, Germany, Denmark and Belgium. But the most speedy and artistic way of playing hockey had been evolved only in India and players like Dhyan Chand were soon to show the beauty of their subtle way of playing to the whole world and thereby raise the dignity of Indian hockey.

4 VICTORIOUS VOYAGE

The possibility of an Indian Army team visiting New Zealand was being considered in the army hockey circles in 1926. Some senior army officers were supposed to go on this tour.

Dhyan Chand was a youngster full of ambition. He was hopeful to find a place in the Indian Army team on account of the favourable opinion many British officers held about him. However, he was nervous and apprehensive, as he was a youngster belonging to a lower rank. According to the then military code of life, it was not possible for 'other ranks' to approach officers, hence, there was no question of discussing even sports matters with them.

Moreover, Dhyan Chand was very shy. He was neither able to express his desire to go on the impending

tour nor could he tell anybody how glad he would be if picked for this tour. Right from his childhood, he was taught not to seek favours from anybody in any walk of life.

Yet he was confident that if he was good and if he could show signs of promise, his seniors would do him justice. Therefore, he continued to play with great zeal and enthusiasm in regimental hockey and also took part in the native army hockey tournament which was the 'blue riband' of Indian military hockey.

The senior British army officers had become very fond of him. They adoringly called him 'the great boy' or 'hockey magician'. Some officers used to practice with him and other sepoys in the hockey field, forgetting the difference in their ranks. This fact had also raised Dhyan Chand's hope. Yet the news of his selection for the tour was not coming from any corner.

One day the commanding officer of his regiment called him, and said, "Boy, you've to go to New Zealand." Dhyan Chand was dumbfounded. He was filled with extreme elation and did not know what to say. All he could do was to click his heels snappily, gave as smart a salute as he possibly could and beat a hasty retreat with a thankful heart. Once out of sight of the officer, he ran like a hare to reach his barracks and communicated the good news to his fellow soldiers. They gave him a hearty reception by lifting him on their shoulders, shouting, "Dhyan Chand, Dhyan Chand!"

His first trainer Subedar-Major Bale (Bhole) Tiwari had tears of joy and contentment in his eyes upon learning this news of well-deserved fortune of his brilliant disciple.

This day was really the most memorable day in the life of Dhyan Chand. When the news reached his parents, they too were dumb-founded and happy. They had become accustomed to Dhyan Chand's going to different places in the country for participating in the hockey tournaments. But going abroad for playing hockey was totally unimaginable for them. No member of their clan or even an acquaintance had ever travelled abroad. Moreover, how could an ordinary 'native sepoy' of a country ruled by the British go with the British officers on a foreign tour? The news was virtually unbelievable for them. They were aware of their poverty; they were naturally worried about who will bear the expenses of this tour. Being an ordinary 'sepoy,' Dhyan Singh's earnings were only a few rupees a month. So he would have to give up all thoughts of equipping himself for an overseas tour of this nature for want of sufficient resources.

The other players were certainly going to be well-dressed. But Dhyan Chand had no feeling of envy in his heart for them. Keeping his cool, he got a woollen coat tailored for him out of the old overcoat and other old warm clothes available in his house. He even took the old quilts made by his mother for cold nights. And

the military kit contained his main outfit. No show or fanfare! Dhyan Chand was really simplicity personified!

His parents watched his preparation with mixed feelings. They were happy to see that their son was the first person from their clan to go abroad and they were sad too because they could not help him in any way. Looking at his meagre clothing, Dhyan Chand's mother Shyama Devi said in a choked voice, "My son, these clothes will prove insufficient in the extreme cold of that foreign country."

Dhyan Chand pacified her, "Don't worry, Mother. The real warmth has to be in the player's body and not in clothes. If a player's spirit is high, cold cannot affect him. These clothes are sufficient for me."

In April 1926, the team sailed to New Zealand via Colombo and it was a very quiet send-off. After 20 days of wearisome voyage they reached New Zealand in early May. Since it was the very first voyage to a foreign country for Dyan Chand and some other Indian players like him, they were all watching everything with the curiosity of a child. They were aware of the fact that they were soldiers first and hence they always behaved like soldiers, maintaining discipline. They consciously kept away from any frolicking. Their simplicity and sense of decorum naturally won for them more affection and respect from their officers.

On landing at New Zealand's port, they were informed that matches would begin from 13 May.

Dhyan Chand and his Indian colleagues had never harboured any false hopes of staying in grand hotels. They were lodged in simple hotels without many facilities. But none of them complained. Their only aim was to play hockey to the best of their ability and prove their worth. For them, it wasn't a hockey tour, it was a military expedition!

They started the tour from the northern part of North Island and made their way down to the southernmost point of North Island, Wellington, winning all their matches by handsome margin. Wellington being one of the most important hockey playing centres in New Zealand, a great number of people had gathered to watch the Indian players in action. The match was played on Wellington's magnificent cricket and rugby ground. Rugby was almost a second religion to the New Zealanders.

The Indian team won that match with a by margin. The 'Kiwi' spectators were awestruck by Dhyan Chand's speed, agility, marksmanship and especially his incredible control over the ball while dribbling. They had never seen such style of hockey. It was not at all rough and overtly aggressive but it was very subtle and effectively penetrating. Dhyan Chand soon became famous all over New Zealand.

However, the Indian team had to face a very stiff opposition from the Canterbury team at Christchurch. The matches were close but they constantly reminded

themselves that they had to keep the prestige of Indian hockey, so they fought their way back with perfect teamwork, superior dribbling and better marksmanship. They won the match by 5-2.

The show with such fighting spirit of the Indian team made them the darling of the entire New Zealand. They were feted and entertained at private houses and public functions in a glorious and enjoyable manner beyond their imagination. Dhyan Chand, particularly, left a lasting impression on the people of New Zealand. They came in great number to watch him play and when some of them shook hands with him, they felt a joy of meeting an 'Angel.'

However, the Indian team lost the second test played in North Island. They lost to New Zealand by 3-4. That day everything seemed to go wrong for them. The ground conditions were bad. But Dhyan Chand said to his colleagues, "Let us give no excuses for our defeat. The truth is that our opponents played better than us."

On that day the Indian players were not only crestfallen but totally exhausted too. They were invited for a public felicitation function, but nobody was in the mood to leave the hotel. However, they knew it would not be proper to avoid this invitation. The defeat was weighing very heavy upon them. But, they were overwhelmed by the show of New Zealanders' love and friendly hospitality which made them forget the sorrow of defeat.

It seemed that the New Zealand players had by then sized up their strength. They seemed to have followed very closely the style of Indian players, their strength and weakness, and used this knowledge to their advantage. They fought the Indian team with equal vigour. Each side netted one goal each and thus the third and last test was 'drawn,' making the honors even.

Though the Indian hockey team had gone to a foreign country for the first time and entered the arena of international hockey, their achievement was truly historic. In this tour of about one and half month they played 21 matches, of which they won 18, drew 2 and lost 1. Collectively they scored 192 goals and had only 24 goals scored against them. Dhyan Chand alone had scored a 'Century of goals' by himself – an astonishing feat indeed! He and his fellow Indian players made their country proud, although it was under the subjugation of British rule.

The news of their victory had already reached India. All the newspapers had highlighted their victory and the wonderful feat of Dhyan Chand in bold letters. He was now at the centre of public attention. His name had started hogging the headlines among the sport-loving Indians and journalists. Dhyan Chand's superior officers and colleagues used to say that he had a great hockey career ahead of him.

He, of course, was very pleased, but being a person of a quiet nature, he kept his jubilation in the background.

There were many occasions when he found his admirers talking highly about him in the military cantonments and army quarters, but he always felt that one should remain firmly grounded in reality and should never show off or be boastful. He honestly felt that one shouldn't be snobbish. He believed that all men are equal and nobody is great or small. As per his temperament, he always kept to himself and did not mingle much with others.

The Army also honoured Dhyan Chand for his successful foreign tour and immediately on return from New Zealand, he was promoted to the post of 'Lance Naik.' He felt very proud of it. Moreover, he was the very first soldier of the Indian army who was given promotion solely based on his success in the field of sports. Nobody had thought that the British who hated Indians would honour an ordinary Indian soldier in such an exceptional manner.

On returning back to his military life, Dhyan Chand forgot hockey for quite some time. In the military circles, they felt that the players who had gone on the tour were as if on a holiday and they should now clear the pending work. Though Dhyan Chand was given occasional facilities for sports, he was not allowed any holiday to go home and meet his family. This made him very sad and lonely at times.

But even then, he did not give up hockey. The success in New Zealand had given him tremendous confidence

and he was now sure of achieving greater success. He had only one dearest friend and that was hockey! Therefore, at odd moments in the barracks, he would practise hockey for hours all alone and kept himself very fit.

The glory of Dhyan Chand's success in New Zealand remained imprinted in the mind of New Zealanders for a very long time. In fact, in 1976, exactly after fifty years, when the Indian Hockey team toured New Zealand, Dhyan Chand's worthy son Ashok Kumar was a member of that team. He was pleasantly surprised to see the 1926 photographs of his illustrious father displayed prominently in the offices of many hockey clubs. He even met his father's fan who still had with him an album of the cuttings of newspaper reports about Dhyan Chand's magical play in the tour of 1926. Ashok Kumar was overwhelmed with astonishment to see all those cuttings collected and preserved with so much love and care even after fifty years. He was also overwhelmed by yet another wonderful experience. During the tour of 1926, Dhyan Chand's hockey-stick was broken while playing a match. Some fans had then collected the pieces of that hockey-stick. When one such fan showed Ashok Kumar a piece of that hockey-stick, his heart was filled with pride and reverence for his great father and felt so grateful to that large-hearted New Zealander. Ashok Kumar thought to himself, "It is no wonder that my father is remembered in India, but

to be remembered with so much love by the citizens of a foreign country even after half a century really shows that he has conquered Time and has become eternal!"

In 'Crossing the Boundary,' Dhyan Chand's name and fame had reached beyond India!

5 HOCKEY WAKES UP

Though the British had ruled India and suppressed her for about 150 years, they gave India some good things too. Their major contribution was the establishment of a great network of railways all over India, thereby bringing people of different provinces closer. They also established an efficient postal service which helped the people to contact one another over great distances. Magnificent buildings like 'Rashtrapati Bhavan' and Mumbai's majestic 'Gateway of India' are also the gifts of British rulers.

The British rulers brought the game of cricket to India, which incidentally has become the most popular game today. They also brought the games of hockey and football to India. All these games have now become an

integral part of Indian life, even though the British have left long ago.

Initially, hockey was just a game to pass time for the British soldiers. From 1890 onwards they allowed Indian soldiers to play with them. The first 'Hockey Club' was established in the sports-loving Kolkata in 1895. And soon, hockey teams came into existence along with cricket teams in the British cantonments. This wonderful game started attracting young Indians from various places like Kolkata, Mumbai, Punjab, Jhansi, Pune, Gwalior, Bihar and Delhi. Wherever hockey teams came up, the organisers of those provinces started holding hockey tournaments. The famous 'Aga Khan Tournament' was started in 1896 in Mumbai. The Indian Military Hockey Tournament was started around the same time and Dhyan Chand had attracted the attention of everybody by winning the first military hockey tournament for his regiment.

The modern Olympic Games came into existence in 1896 when Indian hockey was coming into its own. Earlier in 1890, the tournaments held at Paris included hockey matches, but no team was given the winner's medal because the Olympic Games were only a part of the international exhibition called 'Expo'. In the third Olympic Games held in the United States of America, hockey had no place. It was officially included in the Olympic Games for the first time in the 1908 London

Olympics. Only England had taken the initiative to take the game of hockey to the International level.

The rules and regulations of playing hockey were initially drafted in England – at the Wimbledon Hockey Club – the term 'Field Hockey' was used in order to differentiate it from the customary 'Ice Hockey'; they also drafted a 'rule-book' for the field hockey. Some rules from that rule-book are followed even today. The Royal Family of England did not lag behind in promoting the game of hockey. King Edward VII was, in fact, the first President of British Hockey Association established in 1886 and later became an important milestone in the development of hockey. This association formed hundreds of hockey clubs all over the United Kingdom. Separate hockey associations soon came into existence in Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Then the International Board of Hockey was established in England to take hockey to International level. The first International hockey match was played between England and Ireland in 1894, well before the Olympic Games were resurrected. In that period, wherever the Union Jack of the British Empire was flying high, the game of hockey continued to spread in the British-ruled countries.

Soon the Asian youth got attracted towards hockey and India became a leading hockey playing country. As said before, it was England's initiative due to which hockey was included in the Olympic Games for the first time in 1908 London Olympics. In that tournament

England won the first ever gold medal in hockey by trouncing the team of Ireland by 8-0.

However, owing to the First World War, the 1912 Olympic Games were not held. But in the very next Olympics held at Antwerp, the English team kept the tradition of winning the gold medal by defeating Holland by 5-1.

After four years, the French organisers founded 'the Federation of International Hockey' (FIH) on 7 January 1924 in association with countries like Hungary, Spain, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia. But due to some technical differences with FIH England kept away from the Olympic Games. However, England never interfered in the affairs of the Indian Hockey Federation though it ruled India. On the other hand, the British always encouraged the spread of hockey in India. The Indian Hockey Federation and Indian hockey players also kept themselves away from the then ongoing struggle for India's freedom. Most of them were serving in the British army as soldiers and wanted to establish the game of hockey firmly in India with the help and sponsorship of the British who were already encouraging Indian youth to take up field-games like hockey and football. The British, used to forget their superiority of rank in the field and played shoulder to shoulder with their Indian soldiers. They also facilitated the Indian Hockey Federation's process of becoming a member of the Federation International Hockey.

The Indian Hockey Federation was established in 1926 in Gwalior during the Scindia Gold Cup Hockey Tournament and within just two years India became a member of the International Hockey Federation (IHF) in 1928. It was the first non-European team to be a part of the IHF. It was owing to the efforts of the European countries that the International Hockey Federation succeeded in including hockey in the Olympic Games. The Indian Hockey Federation was also making requests to the Olympic Committee for its inclusion in the Olympic Games.

Dhyan Chand came to know about these developments. He wondered whether the soldiers serving in the Indian army would be included or not in such a team going to participate in the Olympic Games. The people of his regiment were, however, sure that the hockey team for the Olympics cannot be formed without the inclusion of the hockey players of the Indian Army. They thought so because the Indian Hockey Federation was, by and large, managed by Army men and the President of the Federation was a hockey-loving British Army officer, Major Burn Murdoch.

Soon, Dhyan Chand started thinking that 'if he were to be included in the team for the Olympics, would he be able to live up to the expectations of those who selected him?'

When it was declared that the 9th Olympic Games would be held in Holland, Amsterdam, the news

came that hockey would be included in the Games. India's request was accepted by International Olympic Committee and the Indian Hockey Federation decided to send a team to the Amsterdam Olympic Games.

This decision brought about a revolution in the field of Indian sports. For the first time an Indian team had been officially invited to participate in the Olympic Games. The British welcomed this decision. Even though the English hockey team was not participating in those Olympic Games, England allowed the Indian Hockey Team to participate. The British could have easily disallowed Indian team's participation in the Olympic Games by issuing a simple letter, which they never did. This large-heartedness of the British underlined their sporting spirit and surprised everybody.

The Indian Hockey Federation was now confronted with two major problems: how to raise the best possible team from the very few Provincial Hockey Associations existing at that time, and secondly, what procedure should be adopted to pick the best possible players? It was then decided that in order to do justice to everybody, a trial tournament should be held in Kolkata, which had always been the only centre to draw enormous crowds for all kind of games. Kolkata's love for all types of games was praised all over India. The people of Kolkata never bothered to know who was playing. All they were interested in was to see a thrilling match. Once a friendly match of cricket between two foreign countries was held

there, almost whole of Kolkata had gathered to see this International encounter. Even the tennis tournaments held at the South club attracted equally large crowds.

Kolkata had very fine playgrounds and great sports-loving crowd. So the hockey tournament was surely going to be a grand success. But the Indian Hockey Federation had no financial provision for such a tournament. This again raised the doubt about holding this trial tournament and subsequent participation of the Indian hockey team in the Olympics.

When the Bengal Hockey Association came to know about this predicament of the Indian Hockey Federation, the sports-loving Kolkata people came forward and gave total monetary support to the Federation to make the tournament a success in every respect.

Thus, the first Inter-Provincial hockey tournament was held at Kolkata in 1928. Five teams participated in it, namely Punjab, Bengal, Rajputana, Central Provinces and United Provinces (UP). Two major provinces—Bombay and Madras—were not in the draw since they did not have Hockey Associations in those days.

It was hoped that after the successful tour of New Zealand, the Army hockey team would also participate in this tournament. But to the great surprise of Dhyan Chand, the British Army did not allow its team to participate in this tournament. He was aware that the Rajputana team was largely composed of players from Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railways and that

team had won almost every tournament they entered in. Dhyan Chand was eager to prove his own mettle and that of his army colleagues. But now he was really dejected.

However, the United Province Hockey Association approached the Army with a request to spare Dhyan Chand to play for their team since he was born in Allahabad. They pleaded that with Dhyan Chand as the leader in the forward line, their team would have a good chance to win the tournament. The army accepted this request and Dhyan Chand was asked to play for the UP team.

Dhyan Chand was naturally apprehensive because this was to be his first appearance from a civilian side and he might be a misfit and his civilian colleagues might not appreciate his inclusion among them or his style of playing.

But all his fears vanished the moment the players of the United Provinces welcomed him most heartily. They showed him how much they held him in high respect and co-operated with him from the very first day.

6

A BEAUTIFUL GOAL

The United Provinces started practising in Kolkata. N. N. Mukherjee, popularly known as Habul Mukherjee was a member of the UP team. He was the senior most member of the team and had a reputation as a great player. P. C. Banerjee was the team's goalkeeper.

At this camp Dhyan Chand mostly kept himself aloof from other players and used to join them only at meal times and during practice. Whether at home or on the playground, it was his habit to keep quiet and just do his duty. He never indulged in gossiping or meddling into others' affairs.

13 February 1928 must be mentioned as a glorious day in the history of the Indian hockey because it was on this day that the National Hockey Tournament was founded. It was a great moment for India, which was

then under the British Rule. The first match was played between Bengal and the Central Provinces (CP). The experienced players of Bengal showed their superiority by trouncing the CP team by 5-1, though they were one goal down till first half. However, it appeared to Dhyan Chand, who was watching this match, that the Bengal team was over-confident and underestimated their opponents.

That evening, the Bengal Hockey Association organised a party at the Wellington YMCA. All the participating teams were invited. Dhyan Chand's teammates urged him to go with them to this party. But he humbly declined. The next morning his colleagues teased him for having missed great fun, but he did not think so. Because his first match was approaching, all his attention was drawn towards it.

On 14 February 1928, the United Provinces played against Punjab. This was the first match in which Dhyan Chand was playing for the first time for a civilian team. This match was very important for him because his future in hockey depended on it. All the participating teams were playing with great vigour since they knew that the players of the Indian hockey team for the Olympics were going to be selected from this tournament.

Dhyan Chand was worried and nervous for more than one reason. Firstly, he was a stranger to a team for which he had never played before. Secondly, the selectors of the UP team were present there. They had their doubts

whether Dhyan Chand would fit in their team or not. Then, there were many people in the stands, who were watching with severely critical eyes every movement of Dhyan Chand to see if he still proved to be true to the reputation he had made in New Zealand. Yet, he was fully confident that the selection committee would do justice to him. And they really did so because they knew that the people of Kolkata were extremely eager to see Dhyan Chand's play.

The match between the United Provinces and Punjab started with the show of keen fighting spirit by both the sides from the very first minute. Dhyan Chand was playing as the UP centre-forward. A large crowd had been waiting for Dhyan Chand to get going. In addition to brilliant stick-work, his dribbling was of irresistible variety. He demonstrated that as a centre-forward he had few equals. Moreover, he was giving judicious passes to his colleagues and Seaman, who was at the 'outside-left' position, playing a fine game in tandem with Dhyan Chand.

The UP team was leading by 3-1 and there was only a minute left for play. Hopeless as the situation looked, Punjab never gave up trying. Their centre-half was Eric Pinniger, known as the best centre-half of those times. He was the Captain of the Punjab team and was fighting for his prestige as well as a place in the team for the Olympics. He marked Dhyan Chand and thwarted him from scoring any more goals. Then suddenly the Punjab

team scored a goal. The spectators applauded the goal. Indeed, there seemed to be no time for another goal. But Feroze Khan, the Punjab Center-forward's shot away for the UP goal straight from the bully-off, went through the opposing defense and had the ball in the net before anyone realised what was happening. The way Punjab drew level with UP team at 3-3 was nothing short of a miracle.

The tournament was being played on the 'knock-out' basis and so on the very next day, i.e. 15 February, one more match was held between these two teams. The Punjab team was in great spirits for having equalised the earlier match and in their over-confidence, forgot that UP had a very clever forward line. Like in the previous match, they tried to crowd Dhyan Chand, but he was well-prepared this time and smartly pierced through their maze. The UP team won this match by 3-1.

The next match was between Bengal and Rajputana. Bengal was the favourite that day and indeed a better team. But they once again underestimated their opponents and paid a heavy price for this by suffering a defeat by 2-1.

Now, the final match was to be played between the United Provinces and Rajputana. On the evening of 15 February, immediately after winning the replayed semi-final with Punjab, the players of UP team rushed back to the camp, had early dinner and retired to bed. They were exhausted, yet determined to do their best

in the final the next day. This thought weighed heavily upon them and most of them could not have a sound sleep. The senior members of the team, particularly Habul Mukherjee, looked worried and distressed, and were busy discussing plans and strategies to outwit the Rajputana team. But Dhyan Chand was not at all worried. Moreover, being an Army man, he was accustomed to regulate even his sleeping hours and had developed a knack of going to sleep quickly on hitting the bed. So, he had a peaceful and sound sleep.

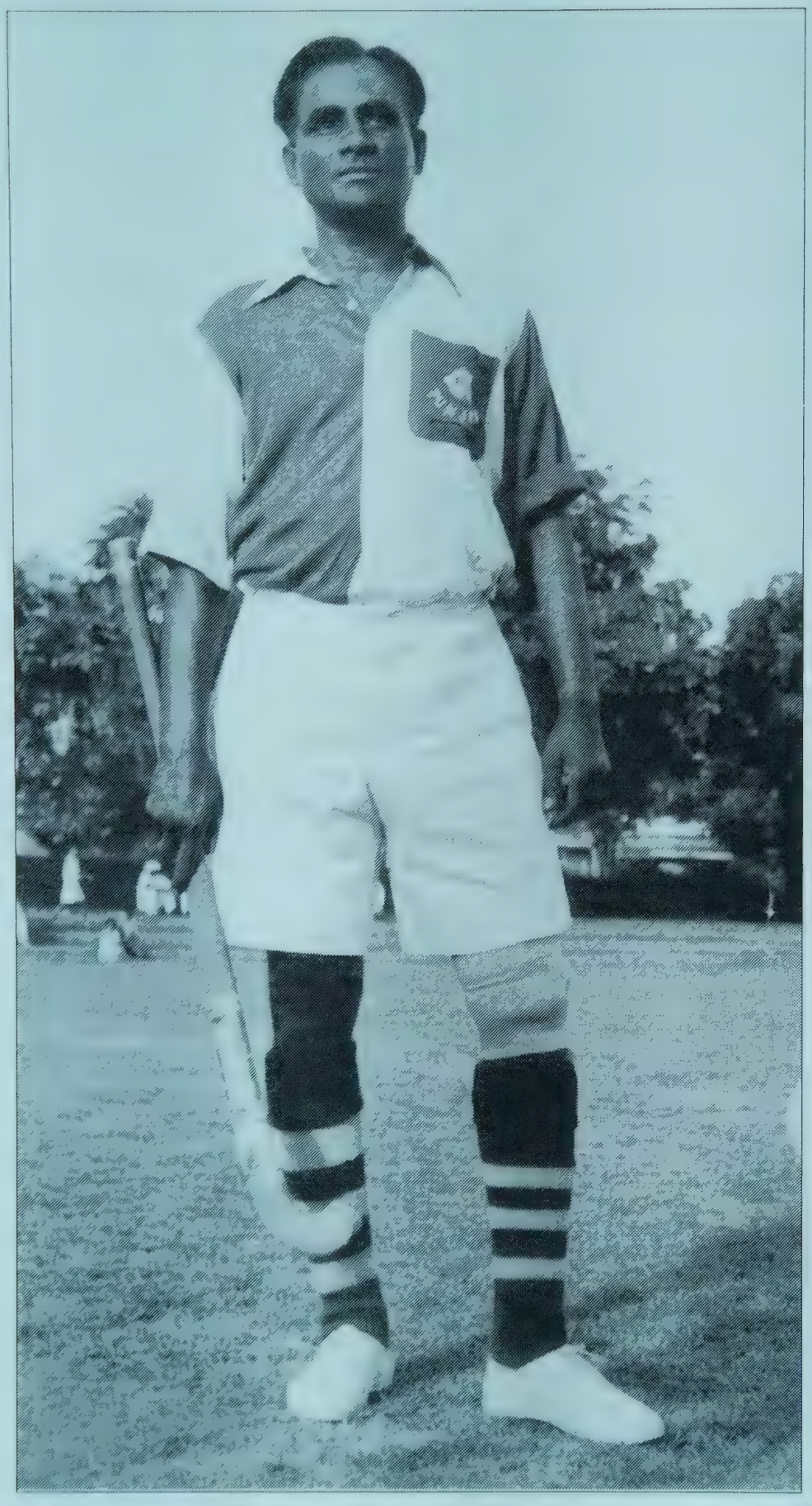
The final match was to be held in the afternoon on 16 February. So, the manager of UP team, Dr. A. C. Chatterjee asked his players to remain indoors and rest as much as possible. Yet he himself was very excited and kept talking to the players, encouraging each one of them. The UP team was going to play a match on the third consecutive day. The CFC (Calcutta Football Club) ground was almost full with excited spectators; the UP team took the field with robust enthusiasm knowing that their style of playing would prove better to Rajputana's indirect method of hockey. And true enough, they started dominating the match from the very first minute. They virtually won the match in the first seven minutes when they scored two goals. The UP forward line moved with precision and smoothness. Dhyan Chand as the centre-forward and Martins as the inside-right showed good understanding of each other. Their co-ordination was very effective. Dhyan Chand kept the large crowd

of spectators enthralled by his clever stick-work. His penetrating run and judicious passing showed him at his best again. In combination with Martins, he took the ball away to the right and Martins did well to give him a good pass. Quick as lightning, Dhyan Chand shot a goal, giving Rajputana's goalkeeper Collie no chance. A goal within 3 minutes of the start was more than what most optimistic of the UP team's supporters could expect. The crowd started applauding Dhyan Chand whole-heartedly. In half-time, UP was leading by 3-0. On their part, Rajputana made every effort to score and also to thwart the onslaught of Dhyan Chand but they could score only one goal. The United Provinces thus won the first National Hockey tournament by 3-1, making the day of 16 February 1928 memorable for them as they had created history.

The UP team received a splendid ovation on the field immediately after the final was over and was literally mobbed by the cheering crowd. Streams of callers kept them busy till late hours of the evening, congratulating them on their triumph. Even the players of Rajputana proved to be sportive as they were the first to congratulate the UP team. Dhyan Chand, along with his teammates, appreciated this grand gesture. But he was more amazed to see the way the whole Kolkata celebrated his team's wonderful victory with ecstatic jubilation.

As soon as this tournament ended, the process of selecting players for Olympics gained momentum.

The main purpose of the just ended tournament was to watch the players in action and select them on the basis of their performance. Dhyan Chand had shown his best ever performance which was unlikely to go unnoticed by the selection committee. Now everybody was waiting anxiously as to when the hockey team for the upcoming Olympics would be selected and the players' names declared.



A picture of Dhyan Chand taken after victory of his team at National Hockey Championship,1928

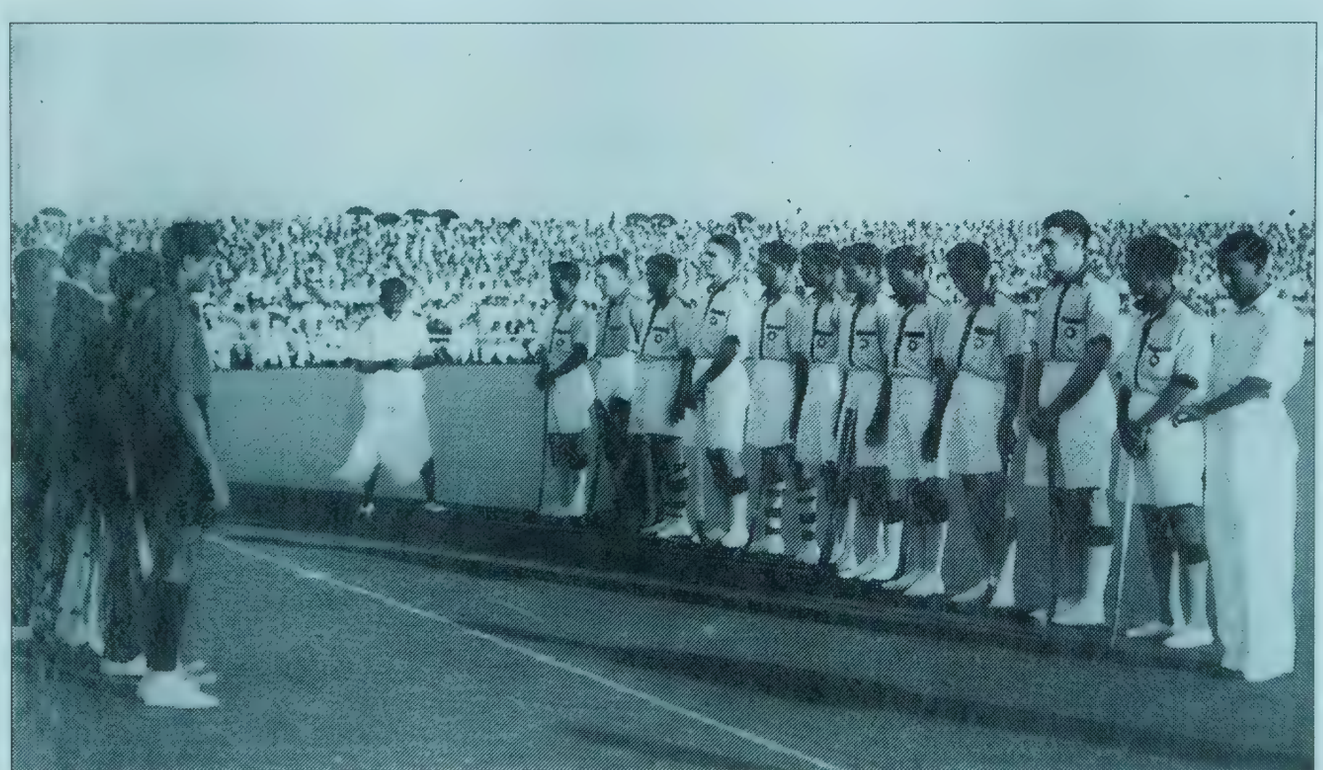
The victorious 1928 Indian Olympic Hockey Team

India and Netherlands hockey teams pose together for a group portrait ahead of the final of the men's hockey event at the 1928 Summer Olympics in Amsterdam, Netherlands

India vs. USA in the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics. India won by a world record score of 24-1

The Indian Hockey Team arrives in Berlin

The Indian Team at Olympic Game Village at Berlin, 1936

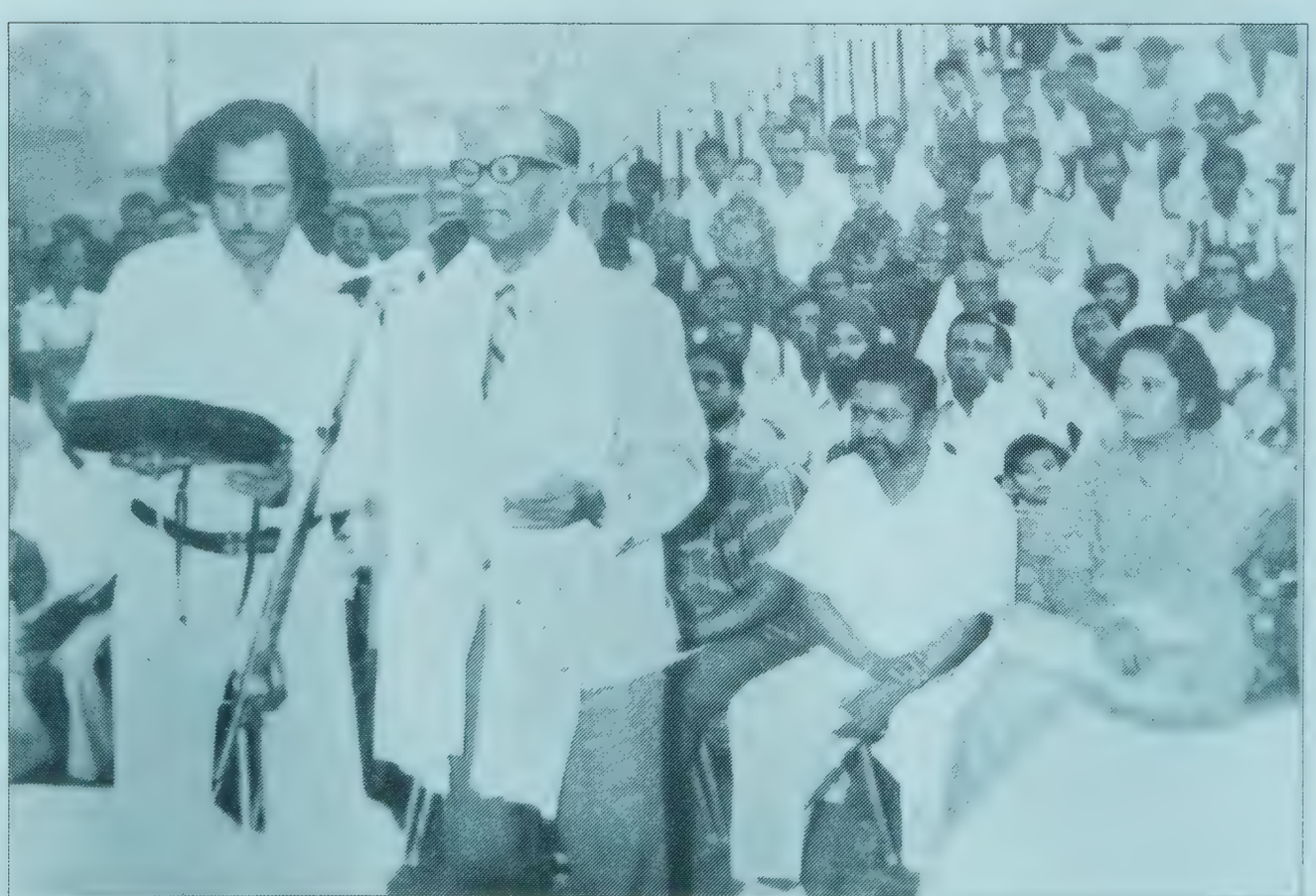


The 1936 Summer Olympics hockey matches saw a total attendance of 184,103 and 157,531 tickets were sold

Dhyan Chand scoring a goal in the 1936 Olympic hockey final

The Indian hockey team completed their first hat-trick of gold medals at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

The Hockey Twins - Dhyan Chand (left) and his younger brother Roop Singh



Dhyan Chand being felicitated by Jhansi Heroes Club after receiving Padma Bhushan in 1956

After 34 years of service, Dhyan Chand retired from the Indian Army in August 1956

Dhyan Chand as Chief Hockey Coach at the National Institute of Sports, Patiala after his retirement

The Indian Postal Service issued a postage stamp in his memory in 1980

7 MISSION OLYMPICS

Holland was making preparations for the 1928 Amsterdam Olympic Games in a big way. It was an event of national pride for Holland in which the whole world had become interested. India was participating in these games with its hockey team and a group of athletes. Though India was under a foreign rule, its players had got freedom to play abroad in an international tournament.

Indian players had participated in the Olympic Games for the first time in the 1920 Antwerp Olympics. But surprisingly, before the official participation in the Olympics, India already had two silver medals in its name. Norman Pritchard, an Anglo-Indian youngster, had participated in the 1900 Paris Olympics while he was studying at the University of Oxford in England.

While participating in the Olympics he had registered India as his country, and since he won two silver medals in the Athletics, India got a place in the list of medal-winning countries!

The players, who could be called truly Indian, participated for the first time in the Antwerp Olympics of 1920. Due to the efforts of Pune's Deccan Gymkhana, a team of five players had been sent to these Olympics. Pune's Nawale and Sangli's Shinde had gone for wrestling, Sangli's Datar for the Marathon while Kolkata's P.C. Bannerjee and Belgaum's P.N. Chaugule had participated in field games. Though none of these players were successful, their tour became the milestone in the formation of the Indian Olympics Federation. A group of 8 Indian players had gone for the 1924 Paris Olympics also but none of them could win a medal.

Now Indian athletes and hockey players were going to participate in the 9th Olympic Games to be held at Amsterdam. However, the Indian Hockey Federation was not ready to select the Indian hockey team solely on the basis of results of the first Inter-provincial hockey tournament. They were not totally satisfied and hence, decided to have two more trial matches for the selection of the players. As the earlier tournaments had been fought on the 'knock-out' basis, the IHF feared that not considering the players of the defeated teams would be unjust to them. Moreover, the general form of the probable players was of the same standard

and it was a hard job for the selectors to make their choice.

The IHF XI were at loggerheads with the Central Provinces (CP). It was because CP had lost in the first match the authorities felt that they were unlikely to have a fair chance in the selection process of a national team. But the IHF XI team won by 2-0. The second and final trial game was played on 17 February between 'possible' and 'probable' lots.

Then on 18 February 1928, a provisional Olympics team was announced in the press, with the proviso that the final team for the Olympics would be declared only after another 24 hours. The selectors now wanted the provisional team to play a match with a side named 'Rest of India' on the CFC ground that evening.

Naturally, it was a battle of nerves for all the players. Yet the combination of Feroze-Dhyan Chand-Martins-Seaman shared a fantastic forward play and the Provisional Olympics team defeated the Rest of India by 2-1. Both these goals were scored by Dhyan Chand and so his selection was certain.

At last on 19 February 1928, it was declared that only thirteen players would be chosen from India, and three or four players who were then in England would be asked to join the Indian team there. One of them was Jaipal Singh, who was the mainstay of the Oxford University team and had earned a great reputation as a wonderful 'full-back' in England. He was naturally

chosen as the Captain of the Indian team. Three other players who were at Cambridge at that time—The Nawab of Pataudi, the great cricket player, Iftekhar Ali Khan and S.M. Yusuf—were also included in the team.

It was a very memorable day for Dhyan Chand because he was included in the Indian Hockey team announced on that day. A. B. Rosser, who was one of the founders of the IHF and also a great player in his younger days, was rightly chosen as the manager of the Indian team.

The selected players immediately underwent a medical checkup for their physical fitness and were instructed to start preparing for the tour. But then an alarming news shocked Dhyan Chand. Ghazanfar Ali, better known as Chunnan, probably the best 'back' in the tournament, was not selected on the pretext of doctors finding him unfit to play due to a foot injury.

It was also heard that because the necessary funds could not be raised, the IHF would be able to send only 11 players instead of 13. IHF needed additional funds of Rs. 15000 and its appeal to the provinces of Bombay, Madras and Burma appeared to fall on deaf ears. The IHF announced that Shaukat Ali of Bengal and R.A. Norris of CP would be included in the team only if the deficit was somehow made up. Once again the Bengal hockey association rushed to help the IHF and made available the required funds just within a day. This brought a great relief to IHF and the fans of all the selected 13 players were happy.

On reaching home, Dhyan Chand first touched his mother's feet with reverence. Her joy had no bounds on knowing about her son's great achievement. Looking at him with affection, she said, "You must have done a good deal of noble deeds in your past life. Moreover, the pains you have taken and the hard work that you have done has all resulted in this good fortune. We are able to see this auspicious day only on account of your great efforts."

The emotional response of his entire family was reflected in his mother's word. Dhyan Chand's siblings were telling people about how their illustrious brother was going on a foreign tour for the second time solely on the basis of his great skill. They were extremely proud of him. But the most joyous was Dhyan Chand's younger brother Roop Singh. He too was now following the footsteps of his elder brother and had started playing hockey. He had resolved to become a great hockey player like his brother and represent his country in an International tournament. Dhyan Chand fondly listened to his brother's thoughts and embraced him with great affection.

On completing required preparations, Dhyan Chand took leave of his family. He also met his army officers to pay his respects to them. The British army gave him permission for the Olympics and also showered upon him the best wishes. He then went to Mumbai to join the Indian players selected for the Olympics. The Indian

squad's voyage to Holland was to start from Mumbai by a ship named 'Kaisar-e-Hind' on 10 March 1928.

Only three out of almost forty crore Indians, Major Burn Murdoch, the President of Indian hockey; his deputy C.E. Newham; and journalist S. Bhattacharya, had come to see-off these Indian players who were creating history by going to represent India officially for the first time in the Olympics!

For many Indian players, this voyage was a new experience. Having toured New Zealand in 1926, Dhyan Chand felt no novelty in the voyage. Yet along with other players, he stood on the deck of the ship, soulfully looking at his motherland till the port lines of Mumbai disappeared. They reached Aden.

The next lap of the voyage from Aden to Suez was gruelling. It took them to port Said through the Red sea and the Suez Canal. All of them were excited as they would be seeing with their own eyes one of the world's greatest engineering feats – the Suez Canal. It was an experience which they could never forget. There was a canal right in the middle of a desert, cut wide and deep enough to allow two or more steamers to pass simultaneously. A railway line also ran all along the West bank of the canal, making it possible to have only a short run by train. Their voyage was from Port Said and Suez to Cairo or Alexandria.

As the boat passed the imposing statue of Ferdinand de Lesseps, the great French engineer, who built the

Suez Canal, all the Indian players filed up on deck and gave a smart salute to that great person.

On reaching Port Said, the boat was supposed to have a fairly long halt. Taking this opportunity, they all made a beeline for the then famous departmental store Simon Artz. Though they didn't have money, they visited Simon Artz undauntedly. They were taking a look at a huge departmental store for the first time and were impressed by the large variety of staff. When their voyage started again, the weather changed suddenly as soon as they entered the Mediterranean. A cold biting wind began to blow making them feel chilly. Dhyan Chand's army overcoat came in handy. Their boat then dropped anchor at Tilburg Docks on 30 March 1928.

8

LONDON DREAMS

The Indian team landed in London, a city clad in fog and cold weather. They were neither given a proper welcome nor did they expect a hearty one because they were well aware of the fact that they had come to a country which was ruling their own land. They were apprehensive of the treatment they may receive at the hands of the domineering British. But nobody ever visualised that this team of Indian hockey players would give a sound thrashing to the English hockey team before departing for Amsterdam Olympics.

They, however, were greeted by the Secretary of English hockey Association, W. F. Smith; Major Ricketts; England's greatest hockey centre-forward, S. H. Shoveller; their nominated Captain Jaipal Singh;

S. M. Yusuf and some representatives of the Hockey Associations of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

They then enjoyed a stroll through the hustle and bustle of London city, its well-lit shops, the wonderful 'Tube Railway'. Moreover, whenever they were confused, the London Bobby, with his proverbial courtesy, came to their aid. They were all given a small hotel but were happy.

On the very next day of their arrival in England they were taken to Alder shot, the military headquarters, for their opening match against a combined services team and lost the match by 2-1.

It was bound to happen because, with weeks on the ship, they could not practise at all. Secondly, they were not at all accustomed to the chilly English weather. Also, the English erratic weather came to the rescue of the home team and it suddenly started raining heavily, making the ground soggy and unfriendly to the Indian players who had no footwear to cope with the English conditions. Thus, they were fighting against all odds. The match had to be abandoned fifteen minutes before the close, depriving the Indians of a chance to score.

Although they stayed in England for quite a long time before leaving for Amsterdam, to their great disappointment, they could not play a full international match in England. The Hockey Board of Great Britain did not bother to arrange any international fixture against the Indian team. Dhyan Chand and his teammates were

expecting England, Wales, Scotland or Ireland to play an international match against them and give them some thrill, practice and valuable experience. Instead, they played with an Anglo-Scottish XI at Merton Abbey, whom they beat by 7-3 and played an Anglo-Irish XI also at Merton Abbey to beat them by 12-4.

They were later invited to participate in England's best known hockey carnival known as the 'Folkestone Festival'. But here also the Hockey Association of England did not put their national side against the Indians. Instead, the English authorities gave them a match against the Hockey Association XI. The Indians beat this team by 4-0. It made Dhyan Chand and his colleagues smile to themselves thinking of England's probable apprehension that their national pride might be hurt if they suffered a defeat at the hands of the players of a 'subject' country. What else could be the reason to name their side as 'Hockey Association XI' when it had 9 international players and 2 trial players?

Such airs of vain pride on the part of the British continued in later years too. The Indian hockey team won the gold medal in 1932 and 1936 Olympics and on both these occasions they stayed for some days in London en route to India. But the English Hockey Association deliberately ignored them.

It was believed that England had initially entered the Olympic hockey competition at Amsterdam in 1928.

But after suffering defeat at the Folkestone, England got scared of losing to the Indians, whom they ruled, and hence withdrew from the event. The fear of defeat at the hands of the Indians even prevented them from playing a friendly match with the Indians.

The Indian team played a total of 11 matches in England – winning 9, drawing 1. They lost only one match which they had played first at Alder shot. These pre-Olympics fixtures served them well and by the time they left for Holland in quest of Olympic honours, they could claim that they were fairly conversant with English hockey. The other advantage of these matches was that since their team consisted of the smallest number of players, it was often necessary for them to play in different positions in the various matches. They also got experience of playing in adverse weather and uncomfortable ground conditions.

Moreover, British people and their press did not take much interest in hockey. Though there were many hockey clubs all over England, hockey was never a popular game in England like football and Cricket. Hence, the Indian players played most of the matches before a sprinkle of spectators. England's daily press, even for the most outstanding and thrilling hockey matches, did not offer more than half a dozen lines.

However, Dhyan Chand's name did come for a lot of praise. He was given the title of a 'human wizard' and a 'human eel' for his mastery and the way he would easily

make his way through the wall of defence erected by the opposition.

It was reported that once the Queen of England was present to see Dhyan Chand's play. She was very much impressed by his game and asked him to play using her umbrella with a curved handle. Dhyan Chand most gladly took her umbrella and not only did he play his usual hockey with it but also scored goals!

Here is the list of matches played by the Indian team in England

31 March –	Against a 'Combined Service team'; suffered defeat by 1-2.
2 April –	Against London XI; won by 5-2.
4 April –	Against Anglo – Scottish XI; won by 7-3.
6 April –	Against Old Rosalious at Folkestone; won by 17-0.
7 April –	Against Folkestone XI; draw by 3-3.
9 April –	Against Freuford XI at Folkestone; won by 2-0.
10 April –	Against Hockey Association XI at Folkestone; won by 4-0.
14 April –	Against Continue London University; won by 7-3.
18 April –	Against Anglo-Irish XI; won by 12-4.

9

A RARE VICTORY

By this time, the brilliance of the Indian hockey team had become great news that spread all over the world. Holland, Germany and Belgium had thus become eager to see the Indian players' hockey and invited them for, what they called, practice matches.

After the conclusion of a victorious tour of England in the last week of April 1928, the Indian team reached Amsterdam on 24 April after crossing the English Channel. After a rest of only two days, the Indian team was to play a match against the Amsterdam XI on 26 April. The Indian team thrashed the Amsterdam XI by 15-2. The next match played at Arnheim near Amsterdam also brought them a comfortable victory by a score of 8-0.

The Dutch hockey authorities fielded their second Olympics XI in a match on 2 May in Amsterdam and

that again was won by the Indian team by 8-0. Later the Indian team journeyed to The Hague to meet the Dutch Olympic team in their last match in Holland and won this match with consummate ease with a score of 8-1.

The 'high-brow' players of Holland had thus surrendered totally before the better-skilled Indian players whom they had thought to be 'backward'. The Indian players spent some time in sight-seeing in Holland before leaving for Germany and Belgium. They visited the International Court of Justice at The Hague. They also saw the picturesque palace of Queen Wilnemind. Holland is known as 'Low Country' because a good part of its hinterland is below sea-level. A trip around those regions reminded the Indian players of some parts of Bengal. They were astonished by the progress made by Holland in the fields of dairy products and fishery. The Indian players and their manager Rosser wanted to see the Doorn house of Wilheim Kaiser, Father of the First World War, who was now living in exile. But they could see only its exterior since that place was heavily guarded.

An invitation came from the 'Deutsche Hockey Bund' (German Hockey Federation) to play two matches in Hanover and Berlin. The Indian team gladly accepted it even though all of them were not completely fit. They had a keen desire to see Berlin.

In their first match at Hanover on 7 May, they defeated the home team by 10-0. Then on 8 May, they defeated a

Berlin XI team by 5-1 at Berlin. It was an exciting game and Dhyan Chand and his teammates learnt the rough way of German hockey, which was full of bully tactics, physical force and flogging. But the smooth-playing Indians easily defeated them by their subtle skill.

From Berlin they crossed over to Belgium for some fixtures there. The journey along the famous Rhine River fascinated some members of their team, and Brussels, the capital of Belgium, highly impressed Dhyan Chand. They were all overwhelmed by the small city's charm and some of its old and famous, beautiful grand churches.

They met Brussels team on 13 May, beating them by 10-2 and thus ended the pre-Olympics tour on a victorious note. Now they were looking forward quite eagerly to the impending Olympic Games. The short pre-Olympic trips to Holland, Germany and Belgium had helped them get acclimatized to continent the conditions. They also sized up their future opponents of these countries. They were worried about just one handicap: the turf on the playgrounds was not properly trimmed. The long grass proved a handicap to them as the ball slowed down and their game of 'flick and push' against their opponent's game of 'hit and run' suffered considerably.

Right from the time of the First World War (1912), Holland had kept on trying to organize the Olympic Game in Amsterdam. At last, Amsterdam became

the host of the 9th Olympic Games of 1928. Holland's efforts of 16 years had borne fruit. So naturally, it was an extremely delightful moment for the countrymen there. Though Holland was not in a position to afford the huge amount of money required to hold such International tournament—with fears of a probable cancellation of the Olympics looming large—the government and industrialists raised the necessary funds through large donations.

The hockey tournament was scheduled to start from 17 May, 1928, two months prior to the inauguration of the main Olympic Games. It was at the request of the Indian Hockey Federation that hockey had been re-introduced in the Amsterdam games. All these years, our country was looking for an opportunity to demonstrate to the world her prowess in the world's finest amateur game of hockey. Therefore, the Indian players were looking forward to the dawn of 17 May with eagerness and mixed feelings.

Nine countries were participating in this tournament. Group A consisted of the host Holland, along with France, Spain and Germany. Group B consisted of India, Austria, Belgium, Denmark and Switzerland.

The Indian players preferred to rest for three days prior to the beginning of the tournament.

The day of their dreams dawned. On 17 May the Indian players marched confidently into the stadium to make their Olympic debut. They had travelled

thousands of miles for this purpose. Indian people had their doubts to the India's participation in the Olympics. The Indian players themselves had some misgivings till then. But on this day they had no doubts whatsoever. They were determined to show the world that India was supreme in this game of hockey.

The weather was fine and they met Austria in their opening match. Austrian players proved very weak before the Indians and were defeated by six clear goals. Dhyan Chand, with his magical play, scored 4 goals and Shaukat Ali and Gateley scored one goal each. This one-sided victory in their opening match of the International tournament not only delighted the Indian players but it also made the other contending teams take them seriously.

The next match was on 18 May when they would meet Belgium in the second round. They had made some changes in their side. Jaipal Singh, who was nominated as the captain of the Indian team, had not been able to play in the first match because he had arrived late. He now played in this second match and partnered with Rocque. There were a few replacements and shuffling of players, but the outcome of this match was in no doubt. The Indian team defeated Belgium by 9-0 and subsequently qualified to meet Denmark in the next match. After a day's rest, they faced Denmark on 20 May. They fielded the same team that had defeated Belgium, for this match. The Danish defence gave a

sterling display; particularly their stout goalkeeper gave a tough time to Dhyan Chand, thwarting many of his efforts, which Dhyan Chand thought were sure winners. Even then the Indian team defeated Denmark by 5-0, achieving a hat-trick of one-sided victories. They kept this tradition in the next two matches also. After Denmark they met Switzerland in the semi-final on 22 May. Once again they beat their opponents by 6-0! Dhyan Chand was the main architect of this glorious victory.

The final match was to be played after four days – host Holland versus India. But in these four days some dramatic happenings made India's victory doubtful. Lead players like Feroze Khan, Shaukat Ali and Kher Singh fell ill and Jaipal Singh was not available. His disappearance in this most crucial game was mysterious and totally questionable for a person who was the captain of the Indian team. Out of the squad of fifteen players, only ten players were fit to play, and they were Allen, Rocque, Hammond, Norris, Dinniger, Yusuf, Gateley, Marthins, Seaman, Cullen and Dhyan Chand.

Dhyan Chand himself was ill with high fever. But for him, there was no option. He was a soldier, not only by profession but also by temperament. How could a soldier with so much fighting spirit sit outside as a mere onlooker when his country's honour was at stake? So he boldly marched into the battlefield of the match with high fever.

That day the team manager Rosser called them before the start of the match and gravelly uttered just three words: 'Do or Die.' These words proved to be a 'magical mantra' and infused great spirit in the Indian players. Dhyan Chand decided that if required he would die playing. With many odds against them, the Indian team entered the field led by Pinniger, who was now made the captain in place of Jaipal Singh. A large crowd welcomed them with a thunderous applause. With their own national team playing, the Dutch people had turned out in large number and the stands were full.

The players of Holland were now filled with tremendous zeal as the huge crowd of their countrymen came to cheer them on. They put up a very good fight. They were now playing in a much better way than they did in the prior practice match against the Indians. It appeared that they too were playing with 'Do or Die' spirit. The Indian team, however, showed that they were the masters of the game. Though some of the finest players were not amongst them today, this made no difference to these spirited players. Once again they established their superiority in all departments of hockey. By demonstrating the fine tradition of Indian hockey to the world, they defeated Holland by 3-0 and thus, won the historic gold medal!

Throughout the tournament, and in all the five matches, not a single goal was scored against the Indian

team and their goalkeeper Allen thus proved to be the best goalkeeper.

Thus, on 26 May 1928, India was acknowledged throughout the world as the Olympic Hockey Champions. After a wait of three days on 29 May, the Indian players lined up at the Olympic stadium to receive their individual gold medals. Their dream had thus been fulfilled only through their hard work, great unity and above all the magical play of Dhyan Chand. Their happiness now knew no bounds!

All these Olympic hockey matches were played in May, but the actual Olympic ceremony and other sporting events took place according to schedule two months later towards the end of July. As a result, the Indian players did not get a chance to enjoy the Olympic atmosphere, the solemn rituals of the opening ceremony and the subsequent thrill and excitement.

But they were still most satisfied because they had proved that India was supreme in world hockey. They had started a new era in the world of Indian sports. It was actually the dawn of the golden era of Dhyan Chand.

10

GOLDEN ERA

Indian hockey was acknowledged as the best in the whole world mainly owing to the magic of Dhyan Chand's way of playing. When the Indian team was leaving for the Amsterdam Olympics, nobody had expected that it would bedazzle the whole world. After winning the Olympics, the Indian team was naturally in a joyous mood. They were having a sense of fulfillment of their long and arduous voyage.

Team manager Rosser was also extremely delighted. He submitted a report to the Indian Hockey Federation at the end of the tour which stated:

> "The exhibition of hockey given by the Indian team impressed and fascinated the countries of Europe. Apart from their wonderful eye, humbleness,

unselfish play, quick movements and teamwork, their display of scientific hockey showed what was possible in this great amateur game.

The main features of Indian hockey that impressed the English and continental players were: positional play, combination of the forwards with the half-backs and the later with the full-backs; the tackling back, quick movements and first-time passes, deft stick work both in attack and in defence; quickness, dash and anticipation; frequent use of the hand to stop the ball and the front to baffle the defence.

Hockey as played in India is the 'creme de la creme' of what first class hockey really should be."

However, the humble Indian players felt only great satisfaction in achieving something for their country. They were feted, entertained and lionized in Holland in a manner which they would never forget. In contrast, when they came to England on their way back home, again the English took little or no notice of them. However, the Indian people residing in London did arrange a reception for them. As they neared the Indian shores, they recalled the three men send-off accorded to them at Mumbai in March. Naturally they did not entertain much hope of a warm welcome on their triumphant homecoming. But they were pleasantly surprised by a totally different scene! As if Mumbai had made amends for her earlier lapse, the city gave these great sons of India a reception befitting the Olympic champions.

There was a huge crowd cheering wildly at the harbour. Dr. G. V. Deshmukh, the famous surgeon and the Mayor of Mumbai was present to accord the Indian team a civic reception. The Governor of Mumbai had sent a representative with a congratulatory message. Among those present to receive them were well-known personalities like Jamnadas Mehta and Benjamin Guy Horniman. The Olympic champions also played a friendly game with the Western India Hockey Association. They beat them by 6-1, as though avenging their defeat by the Mumbai team on 4 March prior to leaving for the Olympics.

Dhyan Chand went straight from Mumbai to Jhansi. His mother had tears of joy and fulfilment in her eyes when she welcomed her glorious son back home. His siblings were equally delighted. The whole of Jhansi had already learnt about Dhyan Chand's great feat in the Olympics and everybody was eager to listen to the saga of his victory. People were queuing up to have a glimpse of their hero or speak a word or two with him.

The person who was hypnotized most by Dhyan Chand's victory was his younger brother Roop Singh. He would not leave the side of his glorious elder brother and remain rooted to listen to Dhyan Chand's narration of his victories. Dhyan Chand noted that ardent love for hockey was taking root in Roop Singh and so decided to train him in hockey. He taught him hockey whenever

he would get time and Roop Singh responded with a hunger to learn more with total dedication. Many youngsters of Jhansi were inspired by Dhyan Chand and had started playing hockey. Now the whole of Jhansi was in love with hockey and many people were urging Dhyan Chand to form a hockey team of Jhansi boys. At last Dhyan Chand formed 'Jhansi Heroes Club.'

Roop Singh started practising hockey under the guidance of his great brother and in a short time he became quite proficient in hockey. He too started shining like his elder brother in the field of hockey. The pair of brothers were the real heroes of the Jhansi Heroes Club. Roop Singh got a job in the army of Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior in 1930.

After a month-long rest at home, Dhyan Chand reported back to the Punjab Regiment. The whole Cantonment praised him for his Olympic victory. But the British government did not take any notice of his unique feat and did not honour him by way of promotion. On the other hand, he was treated like an ordinary soldier and was kept busy in the army routine. He could hardly get spare time to practise hockey. But his love for hockey was so great that he used to practice alone in the night while rest of the cantonment was asleep.

After the Amsterdam Olympics, Dhyan Chand was a little away from competitive hockey. Though he played in the army's tournament and kept on displaying his magical and artistic hockey before the enchanted

British officers, he was unable to participate in any open tournament. Naturally whenever he would come to Jhansi on vacations, he would play hockey to his heart's content. His arrival at Jhansi would prove to be a festival like Diwali for the players of the Jhansi Heroes' club. Those youngsters, along with Roop Singh, would forget themselves while playing hockey before their idol.

Dhyan Chand was always worried about the wellbeing of Roop Singh and similarly, Roop Singh was always eager to meet his elder brother. Consequently, whenever Dhyan Chand came to Jhansi, Roop would take leave and come home and meet his brother with utmost love and affection.

Once, on seeing Roop Singh in somewhat weak condition, Dhyan Chand said in a troubled tone, "Oh, Roop, how weak you have become! I think you should leave Gwalior and come to live here permanently." He did not stop at that but took great care of Roop Singh, including massaging him with his own hands to make him fit again. He went back to his regiment only after ascertaining that Roop Singh was restored to his normal health and vigour. Dhyan Chand and Roop Singh were strung together by the unbreakable bond of brotherly love. It seemed as if one soul resided in two separate bodies. They always used to be in touch with each other. In the game of hockey too, their unprecedented co-ordination was always on display. Four years passed by. The drum-beats of 1932 Olympic Games were being

heard in the world. Now, along with Dhyan Chand, Roop Singh too was eagerly waiting to play in the Olympics. An unprecedented combination had taken place in the household of Someshwar Bais in which two sons of the family nursed the ambition to play hockey and be victorious at the Olympic level. Would this golden chance really come true? Only time could know the answer!

11 TOWARDS LOS ANGELES

Many Indian players start thinking of retirement after winning the Victor's medal in an International tournament. Very few players harbour the ambition to win the glorious Olympic gold medal once again. And it is almost rare to find an Indian player who, after an Olympic Gold, would cherish the ambition to pursue the same all over again!

Generally, Indian players think of reaching the highest peak of their career just by becoming a member of the Olympics squad. They are keen to play in the Olympics but only a few of them aim to become Olympic champions. Though many become Olympic players in India every four years, owing to lack of this winning spirit, only one or two actually succeed in winning a medal in the Olympics.

Dhyan Chand belonged to the tradition of those players who wished to remain undefeated. He was waiting for four years to play in the next Olympics scheduled to be held in Los Angeles, USA. He was sweating it out in the hockey field and working very hard to raise the level of his play while maintaining physical fitness. Roop Singh too was obsessed with the dream of becoming a victorious Olympics player. The way to success in the Olympics is never easy. There are many impediments and pitfalls in between. Today, there are many facilities and equipments available for the betterment of the players. But before independence, it was an ordeal for Indian players to be selected for Olympics.

All those connected with Indian hockey, along with Dhyan Chand, were waiting anxiously for the Olympics. But as the scheduled date approached, doubts were being raised about the participation of the Indian team in the tournament.

The Indian Hockey Federation (IHF) was in two minds regarding participation in the 1932 Olympic Games. Los Angeles was more than twice the distance from India to Amsterdam, and naturally, expenses would be much higher. Some critics pointed out that since most of the countries were not participating in the hockey tournament in Los Angeles, it was not worth spending a huge amount of money in sending the Indian team there.

During this time, Dhyan Chand was posted up North with his Punjab regiment. Though he hardly read any newspapers, he used to keep in touch with events through friends and officers. Things had changed during the past four years. Unlike in 1928, when the affairs of the IHF were largely controlled by the Army Sports Control Board, Dhyan Chand had more opportunities of knowing about behind-the-scenes happenings. However, by 1932, IHFs control had passed largely into the hands of civilians. Naturally, Dhyan Chand's sources of information had dried up. Moreover, being stationed in a cantonment, soldiers like Dhyan Chand were entirely disconnected from civilian contact. In such a scenario, Dhyan Chand was unable to know whether an Indian team would be sent, and if so, what chances he had of being included in the team.

But he was very happy and thrilled to know that the IHF, despite adverse criticism, had finally decided to defend the Olympic hockey title. His happiness was short-lived because army authorities decided not to release him for a fortnight to take part in the selection trials, namely the Inter-Provincial tournament to be held in Kolkata.

But he was put to ease on being told that the Army Sports Control Board felt that he should be included in the Olympic team without the formality of any trial. They felt that he had already established his claims for inclusion in every first class fixture that he had played

in and so the IHF had to include him straightaway as the centre-forward.

Dhyan Chand looked at this news with mixed feelings. Even though he was assured of his inclusion in the team, he felt it was an unenviable preference shown to him while many of his 1928 Olympic teammates were fighting for a place in the team and had to prove their mettle in the Inter-provincial tournament. He was also keen to see what new talent had developed over the past four years. He longed to be in Kolkata for the tournament as a spectator but even that was denied to him.

Then the two officials of IHF, President M. Hayman and Honorary Secretary Pankaj Gupta, undeterred by the lack of finance, decided to send an Indian team to Los Angeles. When the money collected fell short of desired amount, they borrowed a large sum of money from Punjab National Bank in Kolkata. The Bank had lent this large amount with the hope that the Indian team would repeat its glorious feat, and even if they were defeated, the Bank would set aside this issue, thinking that it had done a national duty in aiding the players to undertake the journey. Even then, more funds were required and once again the IHF started a drive for fund collection, which unfortunately was not successful.

Now the IHF thought of new ways to deal with the paucity of funds. Pankaj Gupta planned a more economical voyage via Hong Kong. Hayman put

down two additional conditions. One was that after Los Angeles, the players would have to forego all allowances. The other was that on return journey across Europe, the team should play whatever matches the managements arranged in order to raise the funds to meet the expenses.

After all these preparations, the IHF started the process of selecting the players. Once again, as it happened in 1928, the IHF and Bengal Hockey Association joined hands to undertake the responsibility of staging the Inter-provincial hockey tournament and raise funds for the tour. No other province came forward to shoulder the responsibility. Bengal Hockey Association contributed more than Rs. 21,000 towards the cost of the Olympic tour, which was a lot of money in those days. Members of Bengal Hockey Association came to IHF's rescue for the second time and helped in ensuring that Indian team went to Los Angeles. They had really done a great national service.

In the Inter-provincial tournament, ten provincial hockey associations, participated. Two other associations Bundelkhand and Manavadar wanted to take part. IHF was in a fix because technically both these associations could not be called 'Provincial associations'. However, a compromise formula was reached. Both these teams would play in an exhibition match that would not be a part of the main tournament but would be considered official for the purpose of selecting the Olympic team.

Earlier Bundelkhand had refused to allow Dhyan Chand's brother Roop Singh of the Jhansi Heroes to play for UP but with the compromise, Roop Singh played for both teams and was eventually selected for the Olympic team from UP.

The ten teams that took part in the 1932 Inter-provincial were Bengal, Sindh, Delhi, Gwalior, Mumbai, Rajputana, United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa, Punjab and Railways. Punjab beat Bengal by 2-0 in the final to win the championship. In the exhibition match, Manavadar beat Bundelkhand by 3-1. After the Inter-provincial tournament, two trial matches were held to select the Olympic team. In the first, the Provisional Olympic team beat Railways by 5-1. The next match was between the 'probables' and the 'possibles'; it was won by the 'probables' by 3-0.

After these fixtures, the Olympic team for Los Angeles was selected. But there was some dissatisfaction when the names were announced. Bengal did not like seven players to be selected solely from Punjab. Bengal had very strong candidates for inclusion: Nestor, Henderson, Frank Wells, Shaukat Ali and Seaman. But when the selectors chose only Allen and Tapsell from Bengal, naturally there was considerable agitation in the Kolkata press about the injustice to Bengal players.

Dhyan Chand had the same opinion in the matter. He was shocked like many others at the exclusion of Jaipal Singh, who had captained the Indian team in the

previous Olympics. Jaipal Singh was then back home from Oxford and was participating actively in hockey and was the captain of the Mohan Bagan team. But Bengal Hockey Association ignored him, and on the other hand, the IHF had not done proper justice to the talented Bengali players.

Dhyan Chand was delighted by the inclusion of his brother Roop Singh in the team, but at the same time he was a little hurt by the fact that the selectors preferred Roop Singh above Johny Pinto, a great player from Mumbai. Dhyan Chand would have been happy if both Roop Singh and Johny Pinto had been included.

Again, from among the players who had won the first Gold medal in Olympics for India, only Allen, Pinniger and Hammond were selected, while Shaukat Ali, Kher Singh and Gateley were ignored. Apart from this trio of Allen, Pinniger and Hammond, one more notable player from 1928 Olympic winning team was included, his name was Dhyan Chand.

12

DOWN THE SEA

As expected, Dhyan Chand was selected for the Los Angeles Olympics without playing even a single match in the Inter-provincial tournament. And why shouldn't it be justified? The man with the magic stick was the chief architect of India's maiden Gold Medal in the 1928 Olympics. The country had to honour him. The army readily agreed to give him a green signal to participate in the Olympics.

The inclusion of Roop Singh, his younger brother, in the Indian hockey team for Olympics was enough to compound the delight of Dhyan Chand. It was a rare occasion that two sons of the same family were selected to participate in the most esteemed Olympic Games. Back home, Dhyan Chand's family members were overjoyed with the selection of both the brothers.

Their parents were proud to have such worthy sons. After bidding an emotional 'au revoir' to their family and friends, Dhyan Chand and Roop Singh embarked on their voyage to Los Angeles.

The Indian team was asked to assemble at Bhopal on 14 May 1932. They were given a grand reception by the people of Bhopal. With excellent arrangements, their brief stay was quite pleasant. From Bhopal, the Indian team moved to Bombay (now Mumbai), Bangalore and Madras (now Chennai) to play friendly matches. They won all the matches quite comfortably.

After a hearty send-off at Egmore, they travelled by the Ceylon Boat Mail to Colombo. The journey reminded Dhyan Chand of the Holy epic of the *Ramayana* and the conquest of Lanka by the divine pair of brothers: Ram and Laxman. He was so thrilled because now another pair of Indian brothers – Dhyan Chand and Roop Singh – were on a mission to conquer the world of hockey!

After landing at Talaimanaar, they had to travel by a train to Colombo. However, they were given rude and indecent treatment by the Ceylon Railway authorities. They were not even accommodated in a good coach. Tapsell, one of the team members, had his sister travelling with him. She was an avid hockey lover and was to accompany her brother to Colombo and bid him farewell there. But, the high-headed Ceylon Railway authorities did not even bother to accommodate the girl in a sleeper coach.

The Indian team reached Colombo on 27 May. The agony of their journey resulted in the field: they trounced the Sri Lankan team by 21-0 and by 10-0 in the two consecutive exhibition matches there. Sir Graeme Thomson, Governor of Ceylon, who had come to watch the second match, reacted after the game, "Is the match really over? I thought the Indians played for only five minutes."

Early morning on 30 May, the Indian team set sail by the ship N.Y.K. Haruna Maru. The Japanese officers of the ship warmly welcomed these players and the captain of the ship himself garlanded all these players. Their journey to Singapore was comfortable and they were happy to have Indian food.

As it was Dhyan Chand's third international voyage, he did not have much curiosity about the journey. But for his brother Roop Singh, it was a maiden voyage; he, therefore, was curious and really enjoyed the company of his colleagues.

The journey from Colombo to Singapore took a week. They reached Singapore on 6 June. The Singapore-based Indian residents warmly welcomed the Indian team. The journey from Singapore to Hong Kong, however, was a bit irksome. The passage through the South China Sea was difficult and almost all the Indian players suffered from sea-sickness. When their ship anchored in Hong Kong in the early hours of 9 June 1932, they were greeted by heavy rains, on account of which their

scheduled match with the Hong Kong team had to be cancelled. However, the cancellation gave the Indian players an opportunity to see the great colony of Hong Kong comfortably.

Dhyan Chand was impressed by the rich splendour of Hong Kong. Despite being ruled by the British, Hong Kong was under the claim of China. When Dhyan Chand went to a departmental store to purchase a sweatshirt, he asked for a Japanese singlet. As the store was run by the Chinese owners, the sales girl attending Dhyan Chand seemed annoyed. She said, "We in China produce as good and cheap hosieries as Japan." However, the sales girl's hostile answer surprised Dhyan Chand. Soon the shopkeeper rushed there and quietly explained the reason for it. According to him, Japan had entered into an undeclared war against China over the Manchurian Affair, so it was almost treason to ask for Japanese merchandise in a Chinese town. It presented a good picture of Chinese patriotism to Dhyan Chand. Hence, to honour this noble feeling, he purchased several Chinese sweatshirts.

The Indian team went from Hong Kong to Japan via Shanghai. The Japanese police officers thoroughly checked the belongings of each person on the ship before allowing them deboard the ship. It was because of the conflict with China. Even the atmosphere in Shanghai city was very tense and Japanese soldiers eyed the Indian players with suspicion.

The Indian team went to Kobe from Shanghai. This journey was pleasant. The Indian players started taking brief lessons in Japanese with the help of stewards and by the time they reached Kobe, they were conversant with a fair number of Japanese words and phrases. It helped them later on during their Journey from Kobe to Los Angeles.

On reaching Kobe, they were greeted by a very huge crowd, including the Indian residents based there. After that, the Indian team had an official welcome at the Kansai Hockey Club. Among the distinguished Indians who welcomed them were the revolutionary Ras Behari Bose and Shankar Sahay who later became minister in Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's 'Azad Hind' Government.

Their ship stayed in Kobe harbour for two days and during that period they played two matches which they won by 22-0 and 16-0 respectively. They also visited the offices of the 'Osaka Mainichi', a leading Japanese newspaper, where for the first time they saw the tele-printer. Throughout their stay at Kobe, they enjoyed the proverbial Indian hospitality by the residents.

While going to Tokyo from Kobe by train, the Indian players had a most wonderful experience. They came to know that the Prime Minister of Japan was their co-passenger! They were awestruck to see the highest personality of Japan was travelling in such simplicity and without any pomp and fanfare.

They stayed in Tokyo for five days and played two matches – winning them quite easily. After that they moved to Honolulu, the capital of Hawaii, by the ship named Tasuta Maru. Hawaii – a newborn American state – welcomed the Indian team in a royal way. Mrs. Fullardleo, acting president of the Hawaii Amateur Athletic Association, organised a grand dinner for all the Indian Olympic delegates.

On 1 July, the Indian team received a hearty good-bye. The traditional 'Lei' garlands were handed to all of them and they were asked to drop these garlands into the sea when far from the land. The Indian players were amused by this strange yet sweet tradition.

However, their trip from Honolulu to America was not as pleasant. When their ship touched the American shores, the cold winds from other side were virtually chilling the bones of the Indian team. On July 6, their ship reached San Francisco and the team stayed there for two days. All the players were welcomed with great fanfare in America. The players were photographed and great publicity was given to them in American newspapers. After a long and hectic journey of 42 days, the Indian heroes finally reached San Pedro, a small harbour town on the Pacific coast of California. The tides of the sea must have raised the tides of emotion and zeal in the hearts of the Indian players!

13

INDIA 24-USA 1

After their arrival in San Pedro, the Indian Olympic team was felicitated with the highly-esteemed 'Guests of Honour'. At a civic reception, they were even offered 'the key to the city' by the Mayor. The Organising Committee had made excellent arrangements for their transport to Los Angeles, which was just 10 kilometers away from San Pedro. The ride on the highways was pleasant through a picturesque setting. This first glimpse of the United States of America made a grand impression on the Indian players.

All the Olympic delegates from various countries were accommodated in a pleasantly laid-out Olympic Village in which each cottage had two rooms with a small toilet. There was a common dining hall. The women athletes were lodged at a different place

and were not allowed to enter the Olympic village. A national of each country was assigned to serve as attaché to that country's contingent. Lal Chand Mehra, a California-based Indian, was assigned to look after the Indian players there.

As these players had arrived about three weeks before the start of the Olympic Games, they kept themselves fit and accustomed to the American climate by regular practice. They enjoyed the Californian sunshine the most as it was soothing compared to the scorching sun in India.

The sapling of Olympic Games, initially planted by its baron Pierre De Coubertin, was growing into a big tree. But his dream of establishing an 'Olympic Village' at the site of the Olympic Games, where the players of all the countries would live together with 'Universal brotherhood', was being fulfilled only in 1932 Los Angeles Olympic Games. Thereafter, it was carried forward as tradition in all the following Olympics. The Olympic Games, therefore, became a symbol of 'World Unity' wherein the universal fraternity had overpowered all the differences based on caste, creed or race!

The Americans were greatly fascinated by Indians. The local press also appreciated the Indian team.

A local paper of Los Angeles wrote:

> All the colour, glamour and pageantry of Rudyard Kipling's India might well have found its incarnation

in the personnel of the Indian hockey team, which is to represent the land of Mahatma Gandhi.

So agile are the members of the team that they can run the full length of the hockey field, juggling a small wooden ball with the flat of a hockey stick.

One who knows nothing of the rigours of hockey should take a warning here. Don't get in the line of fire on a hockey field, for the hockey ball, driven by a forehand or a backhand, is almost as deadly and as accurate as a cannon ball.

Should one doubt this, just let them watch the Indian players in their daily practice on the turf of the University. Moreover, the team has two 'Lions' (Singhs) too!"

America had never seen field hockey before. They only knew ice-hockey. There were not more than a hundred people who played hockey in the whole of the United States. So they were naturally in awe of the Olympic Champion Indians, who were fondly called 'Monarchs of hockey,' and as a way of indulgence, they had translated the word 'Singh' from the names of Roop Singh and Gurmeet Singh as 'Lion.' It virtually amused the Indians.

Since field hockey had not yet taken proper roots in America, it was but natural that the American hockey players lagged far behind the other teams. However, America was going to dominate all other sporting events.

Organising the Olympic Games was not at all an easy task. The main problem was always of having sufficient funds. But America used the Olympic Games as a display of its great efficiency and monetary might. The Americans also showed their great business acumen by making the Los Angeles Olympics a profitable venture after meeting all the expenses. Los Angeles is the heartland of 'Hollywood,' the home of America's film industry. It is bestowed with gentle sunshine and great natural beauty. In these pleasant conditions, almost one lakh people gathered to see the Olympic Games, which in itself was a record at that time.

Most modern techniques were used by them to give highest possible facilities, both to the players and the spectators. Electric Photo-finishing Machine was used for the first time in this tournament. And a new tradition of honouring the winning players with their respective medals on a special Winners' podium was initiated.

Now everyone was eagerly looking forward to the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games. On 30 July, the Games were officially declared open. India was participating in only three games: Hockey, Swimming and Athletics. Naleen Malik was the sole swimmer, while Marvin Sutton, R. A. Verinekya and M. C. Dhawan were the three athletes from India. Thus, only 19 representatives from a country, with a population of more than 400 million, had been sent to Los Angeles to

perform. And, not to forget, out of these 19, fifteen were Hockey players!

As per the tradition, Greece was accorded the honour of leading the Olympic parade and the host United States came last. For other nations, it was the traditional alphabetical order.

Since Indian players were representing British India, their flag was the Union Jack, with the Star of India embossed on it. Lal Shah Bokhari, the captain of the Indian hockey team, was given the honour of carrying this flag in the parade. However, the Indian contingent received the greatest applause, since its colourful turbans outshone everything else. Their manager, G. S. Sodhi, had intelligently chosen the Punjabi type turban as the Indian players' headgear and this 'extravagantly unique' headgear naturally caught the attention of everybody. This adulation of a great crowd, and being in a parade comprising the best sportsmen of the world, was a unique experience for the Indian players.

The Olympic hockey tournament was to start just after five days. But only three countries were taking part in it: host nation America, and India and Japan. India was the favourite, being the winner of the last Olympics. On the other hand, both America and Japan were taking part in the Olympic hockey for the first time. Thus, India was the only real contender for the Gold Medal.

The Indian team played their first match on 4 August against Japan. As anticipated, they won easily by 11 goals

to 1. But Dhyan Chand was dismayed by the fact that in the previous 1928 Olympic hockey tournament, not a single goal was conceded against the Indian team. He was baffled to see how, of all the persons, a goalkeeper like Allen was beaten. The Indians had scored 4 goals in the first half. But then the Japanese raised the level of their play, and in the second half, Inochora, the Japanese outside-left, converted a penalty corner with a shot that surprised the Indian defenders.

Dhyan Chand, while analysing this match, thought that perhaps they had taken this match lightly because earlier they had already beaten the Japanese team by 11-0 in Tokyo and thus, knew the strength and weakness of the Japanese. The only explanation to the raised level of the Japanese player's skill could be that they had watched the Indian player's practice minutely almost every day and thereby, had learned many tactics of the Indian players which they copied with great success.

On 8 August, the United States lost to Japan by 2 goals to 9 in the second match of the tournament. The Americans were heavily outclassed. Inochora was the top-scorer with 4 goals. What now remained was the match between India and the United States.

The golden day of 11 August 1932 dawned. As soon as the Indian players entered the hockey field, they started moving like a well-oiled mowing machine, swiftly and easily cutting down the American team to almost shreds. They won this match by 24-1. Everybody was

dumbfounded by the performance of the Indian team. They had set a world-record. The record has remained unsurpassed even today and will probably remain so forever. It was really a miracle to score 24 goals in just 70 minutes of play; and about five thousand spellbound spectators to witness it.

Dhyan Chand scored 8, Roop Singh 10, Gurmeet Singh 5 and Pinniger 1. The American goal was scored by Bodlington. The Indians scored a goal every second minute.

Though only three countries had participated in this hockey tournament, India had scored 35 goals against their opponents. Once again India were crowned the Olympic Champions, and the two brothers, Dhyan Chand and Roop Singh, were the architects of this wonderful feat. At the end of the match, the Indian flag was raised higher than the flags of other countries, making the Indian contingent feel rightfully proud.

The whole of America was stunned in disbelief but the Americans showered high praises on the Indians. One Los Angeles newspaper commenting on the match observed, *"The All-India field hockey team, which G. D. Sondhi had brought to Los Angeles to defend their 1928 title, was a typhoon out of the east, as it trampled under its feet players and spectators alike, shoving out of the Olympic stadium the 11 representing the United States."*

The Indian residents of California were also very proud of these players from their homeland. They took

keen interest in the Indian players and after Pankaj Gupta made an appeal to them at the Bible Hall in Los Angeles, about $ 200 were donated by the Indians to meet the deficit of the Olympic hockey funds.

The news of India's wonderful victory spread all over the world. The Indian people were extremely delighted and were singing praise of their worthy Olympic-winning brothers. Even the Viceroy of India immediately sent the Indian team a cable of congratulations. Haymen read out that cable to the Indian players in the Olympic village: "I am delighted to learn the splendid victory of our hockey team. Please give all members of the side my warm congratulations upon retaining the world championship."

The organising committee of the Olympics also honoured Pankaj Gupta, Charles Newham and Hayman by presenting Umpires' blazers to them.

After winning the world championship, the Indian contingent remained in America for sightseeing. On their return trip, the Indians toured Europe and played friendly matches against Holland, Germany, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

The tour of the Indian team for the Olympics was charted mainly on the basis of loan from the bank. Many attempts were made to raise funds to meet the expenses and pay back the loan. Yet at the end of such highly acclaimed tour, there was a deficit of more than Rs.3000. This deficit, however, was made up by Hayman alone; it was really a grand gesture.

Hayman and Pankaj Gupta had relentlessly worked for the Olympic tour of the Indian players from the start. They heaved a sigh of relief when the Indian team proved successful everywhere. They were truly contented when the Indian team became the Olympic hockey Champions for the second consecutive time. These two persons really had a lion's share in establishing the supremacy of Indian Hockey in the world. Without their efforts, the Indian players would never have made this tour.

In this Olympic campaign of 5 months, the Indian team played 37 matches and scored 338 goals. Their opponents could score only 34 goals against them. Dhyan Chand had scored 133 goals, Roop Singh scored 94 goals, and Gurmeet Singh scored 55 goals. This campaign ended on 16 October 1932 in Lahore. When the 155 day's long tour, which had started on May 14, ended on 16 October, all the players returned to their homes.

When Dhyan Chand and Roop Singh reached Jhansi, they were given a grand welcome at the Jhansi Railway station. Thousands of people had come to salute the victorious sons of the soil. The local hockey players greeted them by forming a canopy of hockey-sticks. The first felicitation was held by Jhansi Heroes Club, followed by felicitation dinner arranged by Dhyan Chand's closest friends Ismail and Baboolal.

Not only India, but the whole world was celebrating Dhyan Chand's victory. In a grand gesture to honour

his wonderful feat in the Los Angeles Olympics, his statue was raised in Vienna. In this unique statue, Dhyan Chand was shown to have four hands, with a hockey-stick in each hand! This was an honour not only for his magical play but also for the artistic style of Indian hockey. Many aspiring players yearn to visit this inspiring statue of Dhyan Chand and bow before it in total reverence.

14 THE JHANSI HEROES

The Indian hockey team had reached the pinnacle of success by winning the Olympic Crown for the second consecutive time at Los Angeles.

As told earlier, they defeated America in the gold medal match by 24-1. There is a rumour about how America could score that solitary goal. It is said that since the Indian team was dominating from the very first minute and the game was being played mostly in the American half, Indian goalkeeper Richard Allen had no work to do. He became assured that the Americans would never be able to reach his 'D,' and so he took things lightly and started signing autographs for the cheering spectators by going behind the goalpost. When the American players noticed this, they made a whole-hearted dash towards the Indian 'D' and scored the goal

in the empty goalpost. Allen realised his grave mistake only after this goal was scored and he felt ashamed all through his life for being so irresponsible. Dhyan Chand, who always took the game seriously, just frowned but preferred to remain silent. It was not his nature to criticise anybody. He was a thorough gentleman, both on and off the field. For thousands of people, he still remains the ideal sportsman.

On his return to Jhansi, the army hockey team arranged a friendly match with Jhansi Heroes Club. Dhyan Chand was requested to play for Jhansi Heroes Club. His team won the match by 4 goals to 2, and all the four goals were scored by Dhyan Chand.

During this time, the President of Indian Hockey Federation, Hayman had also come to Jhansi. When he offered a nice job to Dhyan Chand in the Railways, he was caught two minds. But then, General Duncan, who was commanding the Lahore area, met Dhyan Chand at Lahore and assured him that he would be looked after well in the army. Satisfied with this assurance, Dhyan Chand resolved to continue serving in the army. In his heart, he knew that the great gift of the game of hockey was given to him by the army only and it was because of the army that he was able to go on a foreign tour to earn name and fame in the world of hockey. For him the army was not only his source of living but also the source of glory in his life. Therefore, he even declined the lucrative offer of a nice post in the railways and

his loyalty towards the army remained intact. This act of Dhyan Chand should be an ideal for today's sportspersons.

Dhyan Chand never played for money. Even in his daily life he never gave much importance to money. He followed great ethics all his life. Though he had come from a very poor family, he never ran after money. Throughout his life, he remained very simple, honest, compassionate and soft-spoken. He never criticised anybody. In fact, he always analysed his own way of playing like a stern critic and strove to improve his game. He played only for the sake of his own contentment. He never asked for anybody's help nor did he seek any preferential treatment.

After winning the Olympic hockey Gold medal consecutively for two times, he earned honour and publicity but that did not make him a millionaire like today's Olympic medalists. He ran his household out of the meagre pay he got from the army. The first thing which he did on reaching Jhansi was to place the packet of his salary in the hands of his mother. He never kept back even a single *paisa* for himself. He was never interested in buying new or fashionable clothes or shoes. He was satisfied with whatever he had, as he did not know of a comfortable world beyond his job in the army and the field of hockey.

He was a friend to everybody and an enemy to none. He never treated anybody with enmity. Even on the

hockey field, where jostling and physical fights are in vogue from the very beginning, Dhyan Chand never indulged in such altercation. He even did not retort orally or physically to anyone who deliberately shoved or pushed him. Once in 1933, Dhyan Chand was playing for the Punjab regiment against the Sappers and Miners team. The match was in interesting phase. The players from the opposing team were trying their best to get control over the ball from Dhyan Chand, but he always proved smarter. He was deftly penetrating their wall of defence to score goals. This had greatly enraged the opponents. A totally frustrated and angry player of the opposing team hit Dhyan Chand on the head in a fit of rage. Dhyan Chand started bleeding profusely. He was taken off the field for medical treatment.

But he came back after sometime to resume play with a bandage around his wounded head. Arriving on the field, he straightaway went to the player who had injured him, and patting him on the back, softly said, "Don't worry, I will definitely take revenge." That player was terribly frightened by these words. During the remaining time of the play, he kept looking at Dhyan Chand only constantly worried as to when Dhyan Chand would come to hit him with the hockey stick.

Though being wounded, Dhyan Chand played on bravely and scored six consecutive goals, but not even once he went to that player or even glanced at him. After the match was over, he went to that player to pat him on

the back once again and said gently, "So much of anger is not good while you are playing. It is against the spirit of sports. I have taken my revenge. Had you not hit me, your team would have lost perhaps with the margin of two goals only." The player could not say anything. He just bowed his head in shame to show respect to Dhyan Chand and went away quietly. This act of Dhyan Chand became a legend in the army and he was respected even more.

Hockey was Life for Dhyan Chand, and his life's ambition was to win the Beighton Cup because he had always regarded this competition as the 'blue riband' of Indian Hockey. It was perhaps the best organised hockey event in India then. Kolkata had at least three or four first class hockey grounds and this was a great advantage to the city to run a tournament on schedule. Instituted in 1895, this tournament had a non-stop run. Even the two world wars did not affect this tournament. It was always a big honour to win this prestigious tournament. For Dhyan Chand, the chance to participate in it came in 1933. Jhansi Heroes Club decided to take part in this competition and Dhyan Chand gladly consented to play for his native place. But he was not sure of getting leave from the army to play in this tournament.

However, taking cognizance of Dhyan Chand's devotion to the game of hockey, army officers readily granted him 15 days' leave. He immediately reached

Kolkata. Apart from Dhyan Chand, Roop Singh and Ismail, the Jhansi Heroes Club had mostly new players with little experience. Naturally, the responsibility of winning the tournament rested on the trio. Due to their excellent team-work, Jhansi Heroes' Club won the first four matches quite easily. The schedule of the tournament was very tight. On one day they had to play both in the morning and the afternoon. And after so much exertion, just before the final Dhyan Chand had a serious attack of dysentery, almost endangering his life. But Dr. K. Mishra's serious efforts succeeded in pulling Dhyan Chand out to almost normal, and though he was feeling very weak, he played in the final.

The much awaited and prestigious final of the Beighton Cup was to be played between Kolkata Customs and Jhansi Heroes. Calcutta Customs was a powerful side in those days. They had Shaukat Ali, Asad Ali, Claude Deefholts, Seaman, Mohsin and many others who were there in the first flight of Indian hockey. On the other hand, Jhansi Heroes had many young and inexperienced players, but that team had determined to do or die.

It was a great match full of thrills and it was luck that gave Jhansi Heroes the victory. Right from the beginning the Calcutta Customs team was pressing hard and using the tactics of marking and thwarting Dhyan Chand and Roop Singh, so that they could not score. The first half ended goalless and so the spectators' curiosity

and anxiety was at its peak to see what happens in the second half. But as the second half started, Dhyan Chand suddenly broke through the defence of the opposing team and from midfield gave a long through pass to Ismail, who ran half the length of the ground with Jesse Owen's speed. The Customs left-half and the goal keeper got confused and failed to co-ordinate. Ismail took advantage of their misunderstanding, cut through and netted the only goal of the match. The Jhansi Heroes Club rightly felt very proud of their triumph. The most remarkable thing was that though Dhyan Chand had not scored any goal in this tournament, it remained the most memorable match of his life. This shows how much he valued the glory of the game and the importance of team-work much more than his own fame.

Dhyan Chand always aimed to participate and win all the prestigious hockey tournaments of India. In 1935, he could not participate in the Beighton Cup because he reached Kolkata very late due to late running of trains. Yet he played in the Lakshmibilas Cup tournament in Kolkata, and defeated Mohan Bagan team, which had earlier defeated his Jhansi Heroes Club in the Beighton Cup by 5 goals to nil. Later he played in all the matches of the Beighton Cup in April 1936 for Jhansi Heroes' Club but they lost in the semi-final to Kolkata Customs by a solitary goal in a very close match. He accepted this defeat with an open mind. He was the first to congratulate the winning side saying, "The team which

plays best always wins." He never bothered about victory or defeat. He stepped on the field only to enjoy playing hockey. He remained calm and collected after winning the final of any tournament. On being defeated, he would acknowledge that the other side won because they played in a better way. He had won the hearts of his countrymen by his unselfish way of playing.

Now, he was looking forward to more success in international tournaments. He did not have to wait much for opportunities.

15 THE LION WITH THE CROWN

India had been active in the Olympic movement from pre-independence days. Yuvraj Yadvendra Singh and Prof. Sondhi founded the Indian Olympic Association of Patiala and organised the first West-Asian Sports Festival in 1934. In this event, tournaments of three games—Athletics, Swimming and Hockey—were held in Delhi and Patiala.

Since India had won the Olympic Gold Medal in hockey in two consecutive editions, hockey tournament was included in this sporting event. However, this tournament, which was to be played between only two teams: India and Afghanistan became a milestone for Dhyan Chand because he was made the Captain of the Indian team. This news was a pleasant surprise for Dhyan Chand. Any player of great ranking always wished to be

the captain of his side. It, however, was but natural with respect to Dhyan Chand's glorious achievement with his proverbial magic stick. The Nawab of Manavdar, an avid hockey lover, was also included in his team.

The first match was played on 2 March 1934 in Delhi. In this match, India trounced Afghanistan by 5 goals to nil. It was a remarkable thing to see the Nawab of Manavdar, a prince, playing under the captaincy of Dhyan Chand, a common soldier. It was a great event in the Indian sports in those days.

As the National tournament was not being held in 1934, the Indian Hockey Federation planned a tour of New Zealand for the Indian hockey team. At the very beginning of 1935, a selection committee was formed to select the players for the New Zealand tour. The committee included Pankaj Gupta and some representatives of Punjab, the army, United Provinces and Manavdar Province. They did not waste any time in holding trial matches and straightaway declared the selected team through the newspapers.

Dhyan Chand who was then with his regiment came to know from some newspapers that he had been selected in the team for New Zealand. He was very happy because he was very keen to see New Zealand once again. The prospect of another trip to the Southern Hemisphere thrilled him.

The Nawab of Manavdar was named the Captain for this tour, but as he showed his inability to take

part in the tournament, the mantle of the captaincy was immediately passed on to Dhyan Chand who most gladly accepted this responsibility and resolved to achieve success befitting the great reputation of India in the field of hockey. In those days hockey was more popular in India than cricket. This had made a cricketer like Gopalan take to hockey. Not only he acquired proficiency in hockey, he won a place in the Indian team for the tour of New Zealand. Dhyan Chand was surprised to see his dedication towards hockey and both of them became close friends during this tour.

The 1935 team for New Zealand mostly had youngsters whose names were little known in hockey circles. Dhyan Chand was naturally a bit nervous at first about the performance of such a raw team. But these youngsters put up a great show and justified the selectors' choice. Pankaj Gupta and Behram Doctor were appointed the managers of the Indian team.

The tour started on 13 April 1935, the day the Indian team left Madras for New Zealand and Australia. It was the fourth international tour in Dhyan Chand's life. The team reached Australia within twelve days of voyage. The young and enthusiastic players were keeping themselves fit by regular exercise. Since Roop Singh too was in the side, Dhyan Chand allowed his younger brother more freedom. However, being the captain, he insisted on strict discipline.

As the ship carrying the Indian team moored in Fremantle port of Australia on April 27, they met the representatives of the Western Australia Hockey Association. From there they were taken to Perth, a really beautiful city. They played their first match against the Western Australia XI at the Claremont Show Ground. It was an easy win for the Indians. Though, the half-time score was only 3-2 in favour of India, they completely dominated in the second-half and won by 6-2. Dhyan Chand alone scored six goals in this match.

The next morning they left for Adelaide where the Indian team was given a grand reception by the Mayor of the city on 2 May. The name Adelaide immediately brings to mind the name of Don Bradman. No sportsman would ever think of going to Adelaide, the hometown of the idol of Cricket, Sir Don Bradman, and return without paying a visit to him. All the Indian players had expressed a wish to visit Sir Bradman and Pankaj Gupta had heard them whispering about it. So taking the chance of this reception, he asked the Mayor if he could arrange the Indian team's meeting with Don Bradman who was then in the city.

The Mayor immediately sent a messenger and within a few minutes the great Don Bradman himself came to the City Hall to meet the Indian players. They were amazed by this show of humility and magnanimity of Don Bradman. They bowed in respect before the veteran

Don of cricket who was not only a great cricketer but also a great human being.

It was dream come true. Don Bradman heartily shook hands with Dhyan Chand and even posed for a photograph with the Indian team, a photograph which became a most cherished treasure of Dhyan Chand. In a way it could be said that both Dhyan Chand and Don Bradman were gifted sportsmen of our world. There were many similarities in these two players. Cricket, which is called the 'Gentlemen's game,' got its glory mainly by the gentleman-like play of Bradman. He would come to the field calm and collected, would enjoy playing to his heart's content and by scoring record-breaking centuries, make the world happy along with him. He never altercated with any other player or did not respond to shoves or abuses. Similarly, Dhyan Chand always came to the field quietly and by his magical dribbling scored many astonishing goals without ever boasting about his skill or belittling other players. It was always a great pleasure to watch Dhyan Chand's artistic play. Hockey got its glory and popularity simply because of his magic touch.

Sir Bradman had shown his nobility by voluntarily coming to meet the Indian players. He further showed his great sportsman spirit by coming to see the Indian players in action in the match that was held the same evening. In that match the Indian team defeated a South Australia XI by 10 goals to 1 and among the cheering

spectators there was the cheerful Bradman himself! Dhyan Chand was told later that it was the first hockey match Don Bradman had seen in his life. At the end of the match, Bradman personally congratulated the Indian players. Highly impressed by Dhyan Chand's artistic play, he said to him, "You scored goals as easily as one would take runs in cricket!" While going from Adelaide to Melbourne, the Indian players were still reminiscing about the unforgettable experience of meeting Don Bradman. They had no other topic to talk about.

The artistic play of Indian hockey soon captured the mind of Australian people. At Melbourne, when the Indian team trounced Victoria XI by 15 goals to 4, they were cheered on by more than thirty thousand spectators. The Indian team repeated this wonderful feat at Sydney also where they beat Metropolitan XI by 11-4.

After spending a few days in Sydney, the Indian team sailed from Sydney on 7 May to reach Wellington in New Zealand on 13 May. The New Zealanders were particularly happy because the Indian team's sojourn coincided with the jubilee celebrations of King George V. After the State welcome in the morning, the Mayor of the city gave them a civic reception. It was the highest honour accorded to them.

After some practice matches, India played their first test at Lancaster Park in Christchurch on 22 June. The match was played in the most competitive manner and was attended by about 11,000 spectators. Indians

won the test by 4 goals to 2 after being down by two goals at half-time. Then immediately after half-time, Shahabuddin with a clever flick scored a goal. Soon after, Roop Singh scored another goal with a flick drive. Frank Wells netted the third goal, Roop Singh scored the fourth, and when the final whistle was blown, the Indians sighed in relief.

The second test was played at the Athletic Park at Wellington on 29 June. This test was also a keenly contested match, and its closing stages provided exciting hockey. Frank Wells scored the first goal for India and then Dhyan Chand scored the other two. The New Zealanders fought back bravely and by scoring 2 goals reduced the margin of their defeat. It was a close finish.

These two tests had generated great excitement in New Zealand and hence, more than 12,000 people had come to watch the third test at the Eden Park in Auckland on 20 July. New Zealand players surprised the Indians by scoring the first goal and taking the lead. This made the Indians bring all their skill to the game and they just thrashed the New Zealanders by 7 goals, of which, Dhyan Chand had scored three. Thus, the Indians proved their total dominance over the Kiwis.

On their return journey, the Indian team once again trounced the Australian team and then reached their homeland on 10 September 1935. In this tour of four months, the Indian team had played a total of 48 matches and had scored 584 goals! The opponents could score a

total of 40 goals only. Dhyan Chand had played most wonderfully, befitting his captaincy of the team. He had played in 43 matches and scored the maximum number of goals, a total of 201, a record indeed! And all this was done on the literally unplayable, rain-sodden, uneven grounds in New Zealand and Australia where a through pass or dash or sprint down the line were very hard to achieve. Moreover, to travel to New Zealand in the winter, and to play hockey in the spine-chilling cold, at times with intermittent rain, was a big strain on the Indian players.

It was the most successful tour of his hockey career. The New Zealanders never forgot his most charismatic play. It became evident when Ashok Kumar, the illustrious son of Dhyan Chand, went as a member of the Indian hockey team on the tour of New Zealand in 1970. At that time an erstwhile goalkeeper of New Zealand had come on a wheelchair to meet Ashok Kumar. He said, "I have come to meet you only because you are the son of the great Dhyan Chand. Your father was an astonishing person. I remember, I had stopped his first hit by diving towards the right, and stopped his second stroke again on the left. He then came to me and said, "Well, You have stopped my two hits. Now if you will stop my next stroke, I will stop playing hockey." He proved true to his words. He scored the third hit right above my head and in the centre of the goal-post. There was a very narrow space between my head and

the top bar of the goal-post, but even through that little space Dhyan Chand shot the ball like a bullet in the goal which I could not stop."

Though writing about this saga of victory now looks very easy on paper, the Indian team had earned this victory in the face of the most adverse circumstances. The playgrounds in New Zealand and Australia used to be almost unplayable due to wet and uneven surface. It was not at all easy to turn or dribble the ball in a muddy field. The field conditions did not allow the Indian players to play in their usual 'Indian' style. But they rose to the occasion and by adopting the tactic of 'scooping,' scored goals even in the mud-filled grounds.

When they returned home, they could hear the drum-beats of the oncoming Berlin Olympics, as if the whole country was hopefully predicting a win for the Indian team. The doyens of Indian hockey, Dhyan Chand and his brother Roop Singh, were also contemplating to hopefully share the glory of the Indian hockey in the next Olympics.

16 IN HITLER'S GERMANY

The preparations for the 11th Olympic Games to be held in Berlin had already started all over the world in 1935. In December that year, the Indian Hockey Federation (IHF) decided to defend their Olympic title in the upcoming games of 1936. Once again the IHF decided to hold the Inter-provincial tournament at Kolkata for Selectors of the Indian team. The Bengal Hockey Association gave their helping hand for the third consecutive time to organise this tournament.

The IHF sent a request to the military sports committee to spare Dhyan Chand for this tournament. But the army authorities did not grant any leave to Dhyan Chand. The players for the Olympic Games were to be selected only after trial matches as per new rules. The chances of Dhyan Chand playing in the Olympics for the third

consecutive time appeared bleak. Moreover, being an ordinary soldier, Dhyan Chand was bound by duty to obey his commanding officer.

As a result, Dhyan Chand could not take part in the Inter-Provincial tournament in which 13 teams had participated. In the semi-finals, Bengal defeated Delhi by 3 goals to nil, and Manavdar defeated Bombay by 4-1. In the hard-fought final, Bengal engraved its names for the first time on the National Champion's trophy by defeating Manavdar by just one goal. The IHF announced the Indian team for the Berlin Olympics after the tournament. It comprised of 17 players drawn from Manavdar, Punjab, Bombay, Sindh, Bhopal, Madras, United Provinces, Bengal and the army.

Thousands of hockey lovers all over India were demanding that a gem like Dhyan Chand must be included in the Indian Olympics team without subjecting him to any needless trial matches. The Indian newspapers also warned that it would be a grave mistake not to include Dhyan Chand. Bowing to this pressure, the IHF included Dhyan Chand in the Indian team. Now he would be able to play in the Olympics for the third consecutive time while his brother Roop Singh would be playing his second Olympics. The goalkeeper Allen too would be playing in his third consecutive Olympics.

Dicky Carr, who was the best 'outside-right' for India was not given the necessary leave by the Bengal Nagpur

Railways. This news made Dhyan Chand very sad; he felt that the exclusion of Dicky Carr was a serious blow to the Indian team. The IHF then contacted the Army for Dara but he too could not get leave. So Ahmed Sher Khan was included to fill the vacancy and goalkeeper Mickie from Bengal was also added to the team.

The army was informed about Dhyan Chand's inclusion in the Indian team. Even though Dhyan Chand's battalion was on the front at that time, his officer magnanimously granted him permission. The Captain and manager of the India team were to be selected in April 1936. Three names were being considered for the office of the captain: Jaffar, M. N. Mansood and Dhyan Chand. The last name was unlikely to be considered as captain. Being an ordinary soldier and having low academic qualifications, he was already bypassed in 1932. Jaffer withdrew in Dhyan Chand's favour and an overwhelming number of associations supported him. As a result, Dhyan Chand was named as Captain, Jagannath as Manager, and Pankaj Gupta as Assistant Manager. Dhyan Chand was leading the Indian Hockey team in the Olympics for the first time.

Amid hectic preparations for the Berlin Olympics, Dhyan Chand got married to Janakidevi from Lalitpur. He had to leave for Germany within a fortnight. Since he was totally engrossed with the thoughts about the Olympics, he was not able to pay any attention to his bride. There were whispers in the family as to how he

could go on a foreign tour leaving his newly-wed wife behind. Janakidevi, who was just an immature girl at that time also asked her husband, "Can't you go after some days?" Dhyan Chand sternly replied, "Now my country's hockey team needs me more. On becoming the captain of the team my responsibility has increased. So, please co-operate with me in these delicate times. Pray to God to make my team victorious so that we can bring more glory to our country." Janakidevi did not say anything. As a devoted wife, she gladly gave him permission and bid him a hearty bon voyage.

The Indian team was to begin its journey from Mumbai (then Bombay). Prior to it, exhibition matches had been arranged at Delhi, Jhansi, Bhopal, Chennai (then Madras) and Bengaluru (then Bangalore). But they had a set back because the Delhi Hockey XI defeated them by 4 goals to 1 on 16 June. This defeat created adverse opinion about them. Though the Indian team won all the other subsequent matches easily, the pain of defeat at Delhi was troubling Dhyan Chand's mind. He wondered, 'I am going to captain the Olympic team for the first time. Will India lose the title under my charge?' Nevertheless, his self-confidence was not at all shaken.

The Indian team left Bombay by the ship named Ranpura on 27 June. Some players became victims of sea-sickness. The bad sailing conditions continued till they reached Aden. Luckily, Dhyan Chand's own army unit was then stationed in Aden. The Punjab Regiment

heartily welcomed Dhyan Chand and his colleagues and gave them a feast of Indian food. The journey from Aden to Marseilles was pleasant. The Maharaja of Mysore, Krishnaraja Wadiyar, was also travelling to England for medical treatment in the same ship. Though he had a large number of officers and servants to accompany, he was very happy to see the Indian team on the same boat. Forgetting all his princely status, he mixed freely with the Indian players and even arranged for Indian vegetarian dishes prepared by his own cooks for the Indian players.

Their boat reached Marseilles in the evening of July 10. As the dock workers were on strike, the Indian players had to unload their belongings themselves and go through the customs. These formalities took more time. As a result, they missed the train to Paris and had no option but to spend their night at an ordinary hotel in Marseilles. Early next morning they boarded a train for Paris. Due to paucity of funds they travelled in third class and could not indulge in anything more than a meagre breakfast. But they did not complain. The only aim they had was to win the Olympic Gold medal and make Indian flag flutter high in the Olympic Games. And for that mission, they were ready to encounter any hardship.

On reaching Paris, the Indian players visited the wonderful Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame, Arc de Triomphe. They then took a night train to Berlin. Again, they

had to travel in third class and without any sleeping accommodation in the bitter cold. But they faced these hardships cheerfully because they were on a mission for their country.

But once they reached Berlin, everything became pleasant and thrilling. Thousands of Germans had come to welcome the teams of various countries participating in the Olympics. There were many Indians also among the crowd. At the end of the welcome ceremony, there was a thunderous shout of 'Herr Hitter!' The echoes of this slogan reverberated for a long time. However, the slogan had some vivid message in it, i.e. Hitler's shadow would certainly loom large all over the games!

17

NAZI MYTH SHATTERED

After the welcome ceremony, the Berlin Mayor presented each player a beautiful book about the city. He also pinned a bronze medal on Dhyan Chand. After that, the players travelled in a luxurious bus to the Olympic village which was about 20 miles away from Berlin. Unlike the pre-fabricated and removable cottages of the Los Angeles Olympiad, this village was properly constructed. The representatives of seven nations were already in their nominated residences with their national flags. The Indian contingent's flag, the Union Jack with the star of Indian insignia, was hoisted as the Indian players entered. The name of their cottage was 'Elbing.' It was the name of an industrial town in Germany which had supplied a large number of steam locomotives to India. The cottage was well-equipped

with all amenities and the players' comforts had been carefully attended to. Two stewards were appointed to look after them.

As Olympic Games were not open for professional players, a problem was raised all of a sudden. It was argued before the International Hockey Federation (IHF) that the Indian team was not composed of all amateurs, as most of them had toured New Zealand as professional players in 1935 for six months. How could a player be away from his country and place of work for more than five months at a stretch if he is an amateur? However, the Indians succeeded in convincing the authorities that the players were then on leave with or without pay and the Indian Hockey Federation had not reimbursed them in any way except meeting the normal expenses.

When this hurdle was cleared, the Indians started with the practice games. The Olympic stadium or the 'Reich sports field,' as it was called, was a magnificent affair. Other grounds were arranged in a series one after another; this arrangement surpassed any of the previous Olympic stadiums Dhyan Chand had seen.

On 17 July, the Indian team faced a German International side in a practice match. It was played in Berlin and the Indian team lost by one goal to four. This defeat was a terrible shock to Dhyan Chand and his colleagues. They were surprised to see the great strides the Germans had made in their game. This shock

made the Indians so nervous that they could not sleep that night. Some of them even did not have their dinner. At night Pankaj Gupta, Jagannath, Jaffar and Dhyan Chand went into a conference to analyse the defeat. They reached the conclusion that Masood was the weak link and a substitute for him had to be obtained. The same night Gupta rushed to Berlin and sent a cable to Sir Jagdish Prasad, President of the Indian Hockey Federation, asking him to send Dara, or Frank Wells or Eric Henderson, along with Pinniger. However, nobody was able to tell about Dara's arrival date considering the long distance between India and Germany.

The Olympic Games were to begin in August. The Indian team played 8 practice matches before entering the Olympic field and won all of them. Yet they were unable to forget the humiliating defeat at the hands of the German players. However, the Germans had started taking notice of the artistic way of playing of the Indian team and they were further enamoured by Dhyan Chand's magical stick-work.

The German newspapers were encouraging people to go and watch the magical game of hockey, especially that of Dhyan Chand. After every match, hundreds of spectators would come to the players' enclosure and touch Dhyan Chand's hockey stick to see what trick it was that kept the ball from leaving his stick as he dribbled his way all over the field. One journalist reported: "It looks like he has some invisible magnet

stuck to his hockey stick so that the ball does not leave it at all."

The Olympic Flame which gave the message of 'Fight with all your might' was kindled for the first time in the 1936 Berlin Olympics. It had come from Greece where the Olympic Games began in the ancient times. It was kindled there by the sun-rays and after passing through the hands of the players of various countries it arrived in Berlin after travelling 1837 miles. When this flame was brought in the main stadium, thousands of sports-loving people welcomed it with heartfelt applause. This was the initiation of a glorious tradition, which was later followed in each Olympics with great dignity and fanfare.

When Berlin was named the venue of the 1936 Olympic Games, nobody had any idea about the future political upheaval in Germany. So also when Hitler became the Chancellor of Germany in January 1932, nobody knew of his vicious designs. But in a short time he had transformed Germany into a racist and war-mongering nation. America was greatly stunned by this transformation and had threatened not to participate in the Olympics during Hitler's Nazi regime. But, later, it somehow took part in the Games, in spite of the use of the 'Swastika,' the symbol of Nazi power and military marches of the German army.

The Opening ceremony of Olympic Games held on 1 August was a grand show. The Indian squad marched

handsomely dressed in suits and wearing colourful turbans. In the procession, Dhyan Chand was accorded the honour of leading the Indian players and also holding the flag of India.

Many more countries had taken part in the Berlin Olympics. Nine countries were competing for the medal in hockey. The first match of India was against Hungary on 5 August. Cullen of Madras was taken in the team to play as centre-half in place of Masood. Due to good teamwork India easily defeated Hungary by 4-0. The Hungarian players put up a good fight. Their defence was excellent and their goalkeeper was instrumental in keeping the score low by saving many goals. After the match the Indian players were invited by the Maharaja and Maharani of Baroda to Hotel Adlon and gave them best wishes for further victories.

After two days, on 7 August, they met the United States of America. Again, proving true to the expectations, India defeated America by 7-0. In the evening, they were entertained by the British Ambassador, Sir Eric Phipps.

The next match was against Japan on 10 August. The Japanese players surprisingly played really well. It could be seen that they had picked up a lot of Indian tactics and for the first twenty minutes of play the score was 0-0. But the Indians soon got into the rhythm and defeated Japan by 9-0. After the match, the Oriental club in Berlin gave the Indian team a light

supper as a mark of appreciation. Meanwhile, Dara too arrived the same evening from India to strengthen their prospects.

India's fourth match was against France on 12 August. It was a cakewalk for them as they trounced France by 10-0. In this match Dara scored 2 goals, Roop Singh 2, Tapsell and Shahabuddin one goal each, besides Dhyan Chand's 4. A large crowd watched the match and applauded the Indian players' game heartily. The Berlin Mosque committee honoured the team in the evening.

On the other hand, the German team was also playing wonderfully. In the league matches, they had defeated Denmark by 6-0, Afghanistan by 4-1 and Holland by 3-0.

As a result, the line-up for the Final—between host Germany and India—was on the expected lines. The whole of Germany was extremely eager to see their players in action against India. The German players were earning great victories in Athletics, Swimming and Boxing. They had surpassed America for the first time in the Medal's tally and had reached the number one position. It had made Germany very proud and the German people were certain that their players would win the Hockey gold medal also by defeating India. The stadium where the final was to be played was bound to be full of spectators to its full capacity. German Chancellor, Adolf Hitler was coming to watch this match!

The final was set on Friday, 14 August, but it rained very heavily that day. The Indian players got nervous on seeing the ground lying under deep water. Moreover, the impact of the defeat that Germany had inflicted on them in the practice match was still haunting their minds. Indian squad's manager Jagannath requested the German hockey officials to obtain a postponement to the following day. But as 15 August was the final day of the Berlin Olympic Games and the evening fixtures on that day could not be disturbed, it was finally suggested that the game be staged in the morning.

It was 11 a.m. on 15 August, the final—India Vs Germany at Hockey Stadium, Berlin! Perhaps, it was for the first time in Olympic Hockey that a match was being played in the forenoon. This news had also been broadcast on the radio in the evening of 14 August, increasing the expectancy of the German people. A huge crowd of 40,000 spectators had turned up to witness final. Maharaja of Baroda, the Princess of Bhopal and a large number of Indians who had travelled from England and from all over the continent were also among the crowd.

Huddled around cottage No. 113 of the Olympic village, the Indian players were trying to overcome the trauma of the last defeat from Germany. Suddenly, Pankaj Gupta whirled a Congress Tricolour and said in a grave tone, "Now, it is in your hands to safeguard the pride of this flag which represents our nation's magnificent struggle for freedom from the bondage of the British." This changed

the whole atmosphere. The Indian players were instantly filled with pride for their own country and resolved to maintain its honour. All their despondency was replaced by great vigour and determination. They marched into the stadium with tremendous confidence. The vast crowd cheered as both teams entered the field. The German players were naturally the darling of the crowd and thus, were filled with an obvious arrogance. They felt that they were up against an inferior side destined to be defeated once again.

From the start of the play, the Germans adopted the Indian game of short passes. They were successful up to the 31st minute of the game in cornering Indian players and not allowing the Indians to come near their goal-post. Thousands of spectators were eager to see as to which side would score the first goal. Dara had twice pierced through the German defence and marched to the goal-post, but the referee gave him 'off-side' and thus, his efforts proved futile. On the other hand, the Indian goalkeeper Allen was not allowing the Germans to score any goal. He was standing like a strong rampart.

In the 32nd minute, Jaffar gave a pass to Roop Singh who did not lose his concentration and struck the ball from a difficult angle to send it directly into the German goalpost. India had scored the first goal! The whole stadium was stunned. While the German spectators could not believe what had happened, the Indian spectators among the crowd shouted with jubilation.

Though they had taken a lead of one goal in the first half, the Indians were still worried. Nobody could tell when Germany would score the goal and tilt the balance of the play to their side. Now it was noon. The sun was shining bright. Roop Singh's goal had filled the Indians with greater vigour. They were no more under the cloud of self-doubt. They were looking at their revered 'Tricolour' flag in their mind and Pankaj Gupta's appeal was still ringing in their ears. In the meantime, Dhyan Chand gathered all of them and said, "Now, let us adopt a different tactic of playing by maintaining distance between each other and give long passes. Beware! Germans can score the goal anytime."

After the interval, therefore, the Indians went on an all-out attack. The game was played at a fast pace and was packed with thrilling incidents. The Germans undercut and lifted the ball, but the Indian team countered with brilliant half-volleying and amazing long shots. Dhyan Chand made a most surprising move. He discarded his spiked shoes and stockings and played with bare legs and rubber soles. The whole stadium was agog by this act. But soon they saw the result—Dhyan Chand was running like a threatening jaguar.

Soon the Germans collapsed completely under the Indian attack. They found that the adoption of Indian tactics would not do any good to them since the Indians had many more tricks up their sleeve!

When Germany was down by four goals, a ball hit Allen's pad and rebounded. The Germans took full advantage of this and made a rush, netting the ball before the Indians could stop it. That was the only goal Germans could score. This incited the Indians to play more aggressively. Jaffar scored the fifth goal, and then Dara scored the sixth and the seventh goal. Dhyan Chand and Dara impressed the whole crowd by their splendid combination, while Tapsell impressed by his reliability and Jaffar by his tremendous burst of speed.

Dhyan Chand was the captain of the team and also had the skill and ability to control the ball and score goals all by himself. Yet he was consciously giving passes to his colleagues and helped them score goals. Roop Singh was closely watching this selflessness of his elder brother and became more reverential towards him.

The Indian players had taken a solid lead of 7 goals to one. The German players' idea of adopting the Indian tactics had totally back-fired. Towards the final minutes of the play, the disheartened and irritated German players resorted to playing rough. The German goalkeeper deliberately collided with Dhyan Chand in order to prevent him from scoring a goal. As a result, Dhyan Chand was injured and lost a tooth. But he did not retort in the same brutish way. Instead, he went quietly off the field to get medical treatment and returned to the field again. This proved that he was a true soldier in the real sense of the word.

He started playing more artistically and with great speed. The whole stadium was watching his magical stick-work in great awe. He scored the last goal for his country and sealed India's name on the victor's medal. When the referee blew the long whistle indicating the end of the match, some handful of Indian spectators were celebrating the victory of the superb hockey team of their country, while the rest of the stadium, full of the German spectators was stunned and had become almost dumb to witness the humiliating defeat of their much touted players.

Every member of the Indian team had participated in various matches and so each one of them was qualified for the Olympic gold medal. They were presented their individual gold medals at an impressive ceremony in the stadium. The Indian players accepted this honour with mixed feelings. While they were proud of winning the gold medal and bringing glory to their beloved country, they were disheartened to see the British Union Jack fluttering high to signify their victory. For them, it would have been really apt if their revered 'Tricolour' had been raised on the high mast. But, it was not possible because their country was still in the bondage of the British.

The day the Indian team won the Olympic gold medal for hockey was 15 August. As if it was a good omen given by the destiny herself, this date was earmarked for India to win its independence. The Indian Tricolour

would be hoisted on the high mast at the Olympic Games to signify India's winning the Olympic gold medal, but the Indians had to wait for nine more years for that golden moment.

Well, on 16 August, at an impressive ceremony, the 11th Olympic Games were brought to a close. Herr Hitler, the Reich Chancellor and King Boris of Bulgaria were in the loggia of honour. The Olympic fire was extinguished and the Olympic flag was lowered. After the closing ceremony, a grand banquet was held in the Deutsche Hall where Hitler was also present.

The Indian players then boarded a train to commence their post-Olympic tour of the continent. Many people gave them a hearty send-off quite voluntarily. As a reward for their Olympic victory, the Indian players were allowed a week's holiday in London. Indian's High Commissioner Sir Feroze Khan Noon, the Nawab of Pataudi and G. S. Sondhi made their stay happy.

In those days many great cricketers were ardent fans of hockey, right from Don Bradman to 'Vizzy,' the Maharaja of Vijayanagaram. Film actors and even many politicians had become fans of hockey. When the Indian players returned from England, 'Vizzy,' as the Prince of Vijayanagaram was fondly called, was also travelling back to India by the same ship. He was then the captain of the Indian cricket team. He could not hold himself back from getting photographed with Dhyan Chand on the deck of the steamer Strathmore.

The Indian hockey team reached Mumbai on 29 September. But on landing, the Indian players had a disappointing experience. It was raining heavily and they were received by only two representatives of the Bombay Hockey Association!

Before these players dispersed for their homes they played a round of matches all over India. With each succeeding Olympic tour, the Indian team played matches in an increasing number. They played 25 matches in 1927, 27 matches in 1932 and 39 matches in 1936. Of these 39, they had won 37 and lost only two. The two losses were to Delhi XI (1-4) in Delhi, and to Germany (1-4) in Berlin. But the Indian team had a sweet revenge on Delhi XI after returning from the Olympics, when they thrashed the Delhi team by 12-0. In all these matches Dhyan Chand had scored the maximum number of goals—a total of 59 goals! There was not a single playground where Dhyan Chand's victorious imprints had not left a mark.

The British army authorities had given Dhyan Chand and Dara permission to play in the Olympics at the very last moment. Had this pair of players not gone to the Berlin Olympics, India would in all probability have been deprived of the coveted Olympic gold medal. Probably, Dhyan Chand himself wouldn't have been alive had he not gone to play. When he left for Berlin, his army battalion too left for war on the Burma front only to perish there. The Olympic Games had thus

saved Dhyan Chand's life and thereby brought glory to Indian hockey.

The Indian hockey team's Olympic victory was celebrated all over the country. Everyone was singing the praise of the Indian players and particularly of Dhyan Chand, who had become a national hero. When Dhyan Chand and Roop Singh reached Jhansi, people congratulated them by taking out a victory procession in their honour in which thousands of people cheered them all along the procession path.

Though Dhyan Chand was now a married man, he was actually married to the game of hockey. All the praise and adulation did not go to his head. He remained his usual simple, humble self, a person of noble thoughts. His simplicity, humility and large heartedness had won him a greater glory throughout the world.

18 FUHRER'S OFFER REFUSED!

After their Olympic victory, the whole world was talking about the superb hockey playing skill of Indian players. The Germans had set aside the defeat of their own players at the hands of the Indian team and flocked to meet the Indian players and take their autographs. Even Adolf Hitler, was enchanted by Dhyan Chand's magic!

Actually the gold medals to the victorious hockey players were initially to be handed over to them personally by Hitler. But to his great disappointment those victorious players were not his own countrymen but the Indian players! It enraged him and he had left the stadium in an angry haste. Yet, he was really fascinated by Dhyan Chand and hence sent Dhyan Chand a message to meet him next day.

Dhyan Chand, however, got worried on receiving this message as he had heard many tales of Hitler. So he could not even have a restful sleep. The next morning he went to meet Hitler. He was surprised, when Hitler welcomed him heartily in his private chamber. He asked Dhyan Chand as to what was his position and profession in India. On learning that Dhyan Chand was an ordinary soldier, he said, "You come and settle down here in the German army."

Dhyan Chand politely declined this lucrative offer saying, "My entire family is settled in India. Therefore, it is very difficult for me to settle down here." Hitler simply stared at Dhyan Chand. But sensing the Indian player's humility and honesty, he said, "Well, I understand your predicament, but thank you, and wish you all the best." Thus, the meeting ended on a cordial note and Dhyan Chand heaved a sigh of relief.

Dhyan Chand loved his motherland more than his own life. He never thought of living away from his country. In each and every victory, all he felt was a sense of satisfaction for having done something for the glory of India. Though he was serving in the British army, he had devoted his mind and heart, his life itself, to Mother India.

After the closing ceremony of the Berlin Olympics, a grand banquet was held in the Deutsche hall where Adolf Hitler was present in person. Knowing his hatred for the people of Asia, none from the Indian contingent

even dared to go near him. But in this function, he presented Dhyan Chand a special gold medal of honour and shook hands with him taking everybody by surprise. Dhyan Chand was even given the title 'German Dhyan Chand.'

The great values like patriotism, charity, kindness, honesty, simplicity and team-spirit were imbibed in Dhyan Chand's blood. Be it on the field or the common public meet, his behaviour never changed. Even after scoring hundreds of goals by his magic and artistry, he never boasted about his prowess, he rather humbly remarked: "I could score goals only because my teammates gave me accurate passes."

In Dhyan Chand's hand, the dead and wooden hockey-stick used to come to full life. He was a great exponent of the Indian style of hockey and could easily carry the ball all by himself into the opponent's goal post by skillful 'dribbling.' It had become almost certain that the moment Dhyan Chand got control of the ball, a goal was certain. His way of penetrating the oppositions defence was simply unbelievable. Spectators were mesmerised by his artistic play and often wondered, how he had netted a goal when the ball was on the middle line only few moments ago! Such miracles could surely be seen when Dhyan Chand was on the field. The ball stayed glued to his hockey-stick and these two things did not look different but were one and the same. Many people used to think that Dhyan Chand did some

black magic on his hockey-stick, and so each time he was given a different hockey-stick to play with. But it made no difference and this had earned him the title, 'The magician of hockey.'

But this 'magic' was not achieved overnight. He had toiled and practised hockey all alone over hundreds of nights to earn this exceptional skill. The hockey-stick and the ball were his closest friends while serving in the army. He had set an example before the whole world of how an ordinary person can become an exceptionally talented player on the strength of sheer dedication and hard work.

Though he played with the speed of a whirlwind, he never lost sight of the ball and always anticipated the exact positions of his colleagues on the field and also the positions of rival players. He knew exactly how the ball was to be directed and the weakest link in the defence of the opponents was to be exploited for scoring goals.

Though due to his exceptional skill he won three consecutive gold medals for his country in the Olympics, he never hogged credit for it, nor did he ever boast of his extraordinary skill. He used to say, "Though I had won Olympic medals, it is history now."

He was an ideal player on the hockey field and also an ideal citizen away from the sports arena. He was exceptionally talented and had performed exceptional feats in the field of hockey. Yet, he always preserved his simplicity. Dhyan Chand, who would give accurate

passes to his colleagues so as to let them score goals and thereby increase their self-confidence and self-prestige, was equally helpful in day to day life.

Being a soldier, he was utterly disciplined. He gave a lot of importance to punctuality. For any work or function, he would be ready half an hour before the stipulated time. He always took care that nobody should be troubled or be uncomfortable on his account. He hated to keep anybody waiting for him and respected the time of others as a precious thing.

Apart from hockey, he liked to play billiards and had earned equal mastery over this game too. He was an expert in cricket also. He loved photography but never had enough money to buy a high-quality, expensive camera that he actually wanted for taking photographs. However, he never grudged this and satisfied his liking for photography by using his old camera. He was always eager to learn something new and had acquired many other skills. The most important thing about this monarch of artistic hockey was that he was a poet at heart! He used to write *shayari*- a unique form of Urdu poetry and would compose verses on his favourite actors and actresses. Look at this example. He had once written the following lines:

"Many days have passed ever since I saw someone,
My eyes are restless and thirsty to see her in person..."

19

1000 GOALS

After the heroic victory in the Berlin Olympics, Dhyan Chand started to focus on his family front. His wife Janaki Devi was an ideal homemaker. Knowing the worth of her illustrious husband, she never bothered Dhyan Chand with petty household matters.

After the victory celebrations, he stayed for some days in his hometown Jhansi and then left to do his duties as a soldier. The British army authorities never took any notice of his achievements. They equally ignored another stalwart of hockey 'Dara' who had also scored many goals during the Olympics. Actually both these stalwarts should have been given promotions as a mark of honour for their achievements. But the high-headed British bosses had developed natural hatred

for the Indians—particularly the celebrated—so they deliberately ignored Dhyan Chand and Dara.

However, Dhyan Chand had become the darling of the Indian people. Renowned persons from all walks of life like actors, musicians, singers attended the matches in which Dhyan Chand would be playing. Many great film personalities like Prithvi Raj Kapoor and Kundan Lal (K.L.) Saigal were his fans.

In 1938, Dhyan Chand had gone with his brother Roop Singh and his team of Jhansi Heroes to participate in the Agha Khan Trophy tournament. Both Prithvi Raj Kapoor and the singer K. L. Saigal had come to see that match only to see Dhyan Chand in action.

But since the rival team was playing a completely defensive game, Dhyan Chand's team was unable to score any goal in the first half. A disappointed K. L. Saigal called both the Olympic winning brothers to him and expressed his wonder as to why they were unable to score any goal. The quiet natured Dhyan Chand did not say anything in reply but Roop Singh instantly retorted, "We would surely score goals, only if you would sing for us as many songs as the number of goals scored by us after the end of the match."

As Saigal readily agreed to Roop's proposal, the magic of the brothers did the miracle! In the second half, Dhyan Chand scored 8 goals while his younger brother netted 4! The whole stadium was clapping thunderously and shouting slogans praising Dhyan Chand and Roop

Singh. However, a much overwhelmed Saigal left the stadium before the final whistle. On learning about Saigal's departure, Dhyan Chand asked Prithvi Raj Kapoor, "Well, now who would sing songs for us?" The jovial Roop Singh added, "Now Prithvi Raj Kapoor should sing for us." His words eased the atmosphere and made everyone laugh.

Saigal was famous for his erratic moods. The next day he sent his own car to bring the players of 'Jhansi Heroes Club' to his studio. But when these guests arrived, he said that he was in no mood to sing. This greatly disappointed everybody.

On the third day, K. L. Saigal surprised the players of Jhansi by coming to visit them personally. He profusely apologised for his moody behaviour. He sang as many as 14 songs wholeheartedly for the entire team. Not only this, he gave each player a costly wrist watch as a gift. Dhyan Chand got overwhelmed by this generosity of Saigal. He was more impressed to see that Saigal had humbly apologised for causing inconvenience to them and then had kept his word by singing songs for them. After Saigal's departure, Dhyan Chand said to his colleague, "Such acts of humility have made Saigal such a great person!"

From 1937 onwards, much of Dhyan Chand's time was spent in the army cantonments. Once, his battalion had gone for a camp for four months to Pachmadhi, popularly known as the 'Summer Capital' of Madhya

Pradesh. Many army officers had gone there to enjoy the pleasant, cool atmosphere but none of them cared for the artistic hockey of Dhyan Chand. By that time, the freedom movement had become more vigorous throughout India and this had made the British more hateful towards Indians.

Dhyan Chand's ambition to win the Beighton Cup hockey tournament in Kolkata, then India's foremost hockey tournament, for his Jhansi Heroes Club had been fulfilled. But now this team wanted to win another prestigious hockey tournament, the Agha Khan Trophy. It was one of the best and most colourful tournaments in India and attracted entries from all over the country. At last in 1939, the Jhansi Heroes entered this tournament. They first met Crown Sports Club of Bangalore and defeated them by 3-0. But in the very next match, the Bhopal Wanderers, a provincial team of Madhya Pradesh, which had many renowned players, beat Jhansi Heroes Club by 5-0. However, Dhyan Chand took this defeat in his usual realistic spirit, saying, "The better team won."

After the end of the war on the Burma front, Dhyan Chand got an opportunity to captain the hockey team of the army that toured around the battlefields in Manipur, Burma, the far East and Sri Lanka. The idea was to provide entertainment to the army men. Naturally, there were no prizes to aspire for, yet for Dhyan Chand - playing hockey was a serious business. He took even

a minor exhibition match seriously and never lost his enthusiasm for the game.

Now the whole world, along with Dhyan Chand, was waiting for the 12th Olympics scheduled to be held in Tokyo, Japan in 1940. Japan was making great preparations to make the Olympics a grand success. But 'meanwhile' a war had flared up between Japan and China and the Japanese government took the decision of not holding the Olympics in their country. The Olympics committee then hastily gave a nod for the Games to be played at Helsinki. But in June 1940, the war-clouds started gathering all over Europe and Helsinki too showed its inability to hold the Olympics. Thus, the 12th Olympic Games were finally cancelled. This cancellation made the Indian hockey players very sad. Dhyan Chand was a bit sadder as his team had missed the chance of winning the Olympic gold medal for the fourth time.

Now, hectic preparations were going on all over the world for the impending World War. Dhyan Chand's regiment was ordered to be ready for war against Japan. However, instead of sending him on the war-front, a sports-loving British army officer transferred Dhyan Chand to Ferozepur only to safeguard him from the war.

The whole world was getting embroiled in the cauldron of World War II from 1936 to 1945. This was the period when Dhyan Chand was young and

at the top of his form. Due to his presence, the Indian Hockey team was in a position to defeat any team in the world. But during those eight long years, the Indian team could not go on any foreign tour. Even the next Olympics, scheduled to be held in 1944, were cancelled depriving Dhyan Chand and his team yet another chance of winning the Olympic gold medal. However, he was playing for the army or the Jhansi Heroes in the domestic matches and establishing newer records of scoring goals, along with earning satisfaction to see many young boys getting motivated by his play and taking up hockey.

The World War ended in 1945, but now the movement for India's freedom got more vigorous and spread all over the country. The British too were tired by now of fighting against the spirited Indian people and had started thinking of liberating India from the shackles of the British Empire. Though Dhyan Chand was serving in the British army, he was also anxious to see his country free and independent.

After struggling to shake off the bondage of the British rulers for nearly 150 years, India gained its freedom in 1947. Dhyan Chand felt fortunate to see this golden day in his own lifetime, though he was a little sad along with thousands of likeminded Indians on account of the partition of India into two countries – India and Pakistan. Ferozepur, where Dhyan Chand was then stationed, was included in the newly-formed Pakistan.

Dhyan Chand had naturally opted to remain in the Indian army but his closest friend Dara, who had paired with Dhyan Chand in scoring many dazzling goals, opted to become a Pakistani citizen. Dhyan Chand was greatly pained by this double partition – the partition of India and the partition he suffered from his teammate.

Dhyan Chand was now 42, but his mastery in hockey had not been adversely affected by his advancing age. He could still gain control over the ball easily by leaving behind players half his age. But now he had started thinking about retiring from the field of hockey. At that time, unexpectedly he had to go on a tour of East Africa. He thought that he had reached the pinnacle of glory in hockey which he had played for almost two decades and it was now time to make way for younger players by hanging his boots. But destiny had different thoughts in store for him.

The Indian Hockey Federation was requested in 1947 by the Aston Sports Association (ASA) of East Africa to send a good hockey team to that country to play a series of matches. In addition, they made it a condition that Dhyan Chand must be in that team. The Indian people residing in East Africa were eager to see Dhyan Chand play. They had heard many anecdotes about his magical play and had therefore lobbied with the authorities for making this special request for Dhyan Chand's inclusion in the Indian team. The Federation gladly conceded to this request by not only including Dhyan Chand in the

team but also honouring him by making him the captain of the team.

The selected players assembled in Mumbai on 23 November 1947 and sailed to East Africa on 6 December. They reached Mombasa on 15 December and were accorded a warm reception by the officials of the Asian Sports Association and Indian people living there. The Governors of Kenya and Uganda also sent their messages welcoming them.

The Indian team played 28 matches in East Africa and won all of them. Throughout their stay in East Africa, the Indian team was like one happy family under the guardianship of Dhyan Chand. The East African press chronicled their stay suitably and highly praised the sporting spirit shown by the Indian boys. Great accolades were reserved for Dhyan Chand. People were not only mesmerised by his wonderful play but they were also awe-struck to see 42 year old Dhyan Chand playing more competitively than the players half his age and scoring goals with lightning speed. In all, he scored 61 goals and won the hearts of all the East African people. The hosts were so impressed by the magical play and most gentle behaviour of the Indian team that they did everything possible to entertain their wonderful visitors. Many civic welcomes, lunches and dinners were arranged in their honour.

But then the great disaster occurred on 30 January 1948 when Mahatma Gandhi was brutally assassinated.

This horrible act shocked the whole world, and British East Africa was no exception. During the mourning period, to pay homage to the 'Father of the Nation,' the Indian team cancelled all their social engagements.

But all the enthusiasm and the goodwill they carried back to India received a shock from the manner in which their own country ignored their victorious return. This team contained a large number of young and talented players who expected that their countrymen would encourage them further by cheering their victorious feat. But India had no word of cheer for them. The Federation was entirely to be blamed; they did not think it worthwhile even to hold an official reception in honour of the players. This indifferent behaviour made the young Indian players very sad and their morale was greatly affected.

In 1948, a disheartened Dhyan Chand declared his retirement from first class hockey. He was only to play for the army team and the Jhansi Heroes Club. But 1948 was the year when the Olympic Games were to be held in London and the whole country wanted that Dhyan Chand should be included in the Indian hockey team. The Indian Hockey Federation also proposed to make him an honorary member of the team. But Dhyan Chand resolutely turned down all such requests. He said, "I have served my country to the best of my ability all these years and I have groomed some young players. So now, let them show their skill and shine.

We must encourage the younger generation and older players should make room for the new talent." What a great ideal Dhyan Chand had set in the world of sports! There is so much to learn from Dhyan Chand's selflessness.

Dhyan Chand, one of the greatest players of all times, bade adieu to hockey without any fanfare. In the career spanning two decades he had set the world record of scoring more than 400 goals in International hockey, out of a total of more than 1000 goals. There would be no player to equal or surpass this astonishing feat of Dhyan Chand. He is like the Mount Everest in hockey and no one can scale that height. The history of hockey will remain incomplete if Dhyan Chand's glorious feats are not recorded in it.

20

AN ERA ENDS NOW

Though Dhyan Chand hanged his hockey boots, the younger players groomed by him didn't let him down. The young Indian hockey team once again started the tradition of winning gold medals in the Olympics. They defeated England in the final of the 1948 London Olympics, the first Olympics after the Second World War. When Dhyan Chand heard the news of India's victory on the radio, he had tears of joy and satisfaction in his eyes. He was now confident that the torch of success in hockey he had carried for over two decades would be relayed forward by the young Indian hockey players.

This Olympic victory had been achieved under the captaincy of Kishan Singh, who was ably aided by K. D. Babu as vice-captain. For Kishan Singh, Dhyan Chand

was his childhood hero and K. D. Singh alias 'Babu' had learned hockey from the person who had given lessons in hockey to Dhyan Chand. He had great regard and affection for Dhyan Chand and always used to give credit of all his achievements in hockey to the inspiration of Dhyan Chand.

Babu constantly remained in touch with Dhyan Chand. They would regularly write letters to each other in the most cordial manner. The next generation players would always consult Dhyan Chand respectfully. But things started changing with each subsequent generation of players. Once these new players got attracted to the European style of hockey, they lost all interest in the traditional and artistic Indian style of playing hockey. They started ignoring the older players. However, as this generation gap widened, victory started eluding the Indian players in the International hockey.

After retiring from the International hockey, Dhyan Chand continued to play for the army. A hockey tournament of the armed forces was held in March 1949 in Kolkata. Dhyan Chand captained the team of the Eastern Command and his team easily won the trophy. During this tournament, the Bengal Hockey Association had taken a lead to organise a friendly match between the army team and the local team in order to raise funds for the welfare of the soldiers. The Bengal XI had young and talented players who easily defeated the older players of the army by 5-1. Though this result

was expected, a huge crowd had come to see this match only to see the older stalwarts like Dhyan Chand in action. This great response made the Bengal Hockey Association more enthusiastic and they proposed to hold an exhibition match between the Indian Olympic team, which had recently won the gold medal in 1948 London Olympics, and a team comprising of players drawn from the various states of India. Dhyan Chand was requested to select the players for the 'Rest of India' team. He was given complete authority for selection.

This match was highly publicised by the Bengal Hockey Association and true to their expectation, thousands of people purchased tickets and rushed to watch this match. The amount collected by selling the tickets set a record in the history of Indian hockey. For the first time, people had purchased tickets worth Rs.14,298 for watching a hockey match! This match held in April 1949 was thrilling to the last minute. The Olympic Winning team had to fight very hard to defeat the 'Rest of India' team by 2 goals to 1. The only goal scored by the Rest of India team was by Dhyan Chand at the age of 44! The whole stadium honoured Dhyan Chand by giving him a standing ovation at the end of the match.

In the same year, Dhyan Chand was to play in an exhibition match in the Beighton Cup. It was organised by the Bengal Hockey Association (BHA) to honour his invaluable contribution towards hockey and it was

decided to present the earnings of this match to Dhyan Chand as a mark of honour. But Dhyan Chand once again proved true to his noble spirit and selflessness. He had great affection for ordinary soldiers who fought against all odds to safeguard the borders of his great country. So, he not only declared that this match was to be played to raise funds for the welfare of the soldiers but also said that every *paisa* of the earnings would go to the soldier's welfare-fund and he would take nothing. People once again saw in Dhyan Chand the living example of an ideal person. As mentioned in the Bhagawad Gita, "a good person always thinks that it is only within his rights to do his duty honestly without ever bothering for the rewards for his labour."

Though this thrilling match ended with a draw, it remained memorable for Dhyan Chand all through his life. For him, it was the highest moment of his hockey career. After the first half, the Bengal Hockey Association held a small ceremony to honour Dhyan Chand. He was presented with a silver plaque as a mark of honour. He was also offered a suitably inscribed silver cigarette case. During the interval, the two teams lined up and after BHA president G. C. Fletcher made a few remarks in praise of Dhyan Chand, his wife made the presentation to Dhyan Chand. The words inscribed on that cigarette case were: "To Captain Dhyan Chand from BHA in recognition of his unique services for the cause of world hockey."

Fletcher observed:

"This was the last occasion, when Kolkata would have the pleasure of seeing one of India's most outstanding sportsmen in action. Captain Dhyan Chand is rightly acknowledged as the finest centre-forward the game has even seen. His outstanding skill and artistry are world famous, and there is little doubt that if a vote were to be taken, he would unanimously be elected as India's most popular sportsman. His success and brilliance on the field of play have never affected his quiet and friendly demeanor. He has been a great player, a great captain and a great ambassador of this country in whatever part of the world he has travelled. What Don Bradman is to Australia and to world cricket, Dhyan Chand is to India and world hockey. He has made the game of hockey famous all over the world and in turn has himself become world famous as the greatest hockey player of all times."

"A greatly moved Dhyan Chand replied to all this praise most humbly saying:"

"I am grateful to you for all your kind thoughts and actions. What little I have done in the field of hockey for my country has been due to the kindness and affection shown to me by officials and members of the public. I feel it is my duty to convey to you all my most grateful thanks for all that you have done for me. For the city of Kolkata, I have nothing but admiration and this will last till the last day of my life. The public of this great city have always been

kind to me. Ever since the day in 1928 when I first played here, I have been most fortunate to continue to have your affection. The press here has always been tolerant, and the encouragement given to me by them in no small measure helped me to maintain my confidence in myself."

"To Pankaj Gupta, my old friend, I owe a special debt of gratitude, but the time at my disposal will not permit me to go into details. Finally, I convey my grateful thanks to all who thought so kindly of me and brought me to this great day. To the young players of today I say- Keep the flag of India flying."

After getting this honour in Kolkata, Dhyan Chand retired. Thereafter, he did not play any first class hockey match. After 1950, he started coaching and guiding the hockey players of the army. A new phase as 'Hockey Instructor' had begun for him. By now he had become an idol for all the sports-loving people. The Indian army was proud of his great achievement, and in order to honour him properly, he was given the rank of a 'Major.' Thus, the army had actually saluted all that he had done in the field of hockey to bring glory to India. Dhyan Chand was rightly moved by this honour. The British army officers never gave him such recognition, but now in his free country, the Indian Army officers had realised his great worth.

Before Independence, the team of undivided India had won the last Olympic gold medal under the

captaincy of Dhyan Chand in Germany. Dara, who had played in that match and was a close friend of Dhyan Chand, had settled in Pakistan after the partition. Now, India and Pakistan had become sworn enemies of each other even in the game of hockey. But the friendship of Dara and Dhyan Chand remained unblemished.

If Dhyan Chand gave direction to the Indian hockey, Dara did the same in Pakistan and built a team of young players who could challenge the might of Indian hockey with equal strength and skill in the sixties. Due to Dara's efforts, the Pakistan Hockey team started winning great matches. Dhyan Chand used to praise Dara saying, "Look, what great work Dara has done for hockey in Pakistan!"

On the other hand, Dara never got tired of praising Dhyan Chand and used to ask his young players to follow the example of the mighty Dhyan Chand. The first sporting contact between India and Pakistan, after the 1971 Bangladesh liberation, came in the form of the Asian All-Stars team of 1974. Ali Iqtidar Shah Dara was the one who organised the event. When the All-stars team played in India, Dara called his friend Dhyan Chand from Jhansi to Delhi. Both were overjoyed meeting each other after a very long time and talked about their old glorious times. Both were sorry for the partition of their country. They agreed, had there been no partition of India and Pakistan, the undivided India would have remained the monarch of International hockey forever.

Years later when he heard the news of Dhyan Chand's demise, Dara was in tears. He also wrote an article on World Hockey in March-May 1970 entitled 'Dhyan Chand: The Indian Wizard." In the article he wrote, "Cricket may have its Grace, Hobbs and Bradman, but hockey has one and only one Dhyan Chand, incomparable and unique. This maestro will always remain as the all-time great of hockey. Though he was light-built, he was a giant among players on the field."

Dhyan Chand retired from the armed forces in 1956. Since he was 'the living university of hockey,' the government of India appointed him as hockey Instructor. Dhyan Chand's fame as the hockey coach started spreading, and the government took its timely note and appointed him Chief Hockey Coach at the National Institute of Sports, Patiala. He served in that capacity for many years. During that period, he accompanied the Indian hockey team to the Mexico Olympic Games in 1968 as their Coach.

It is rare for a very good player to become a very good coach, however, Dhyan Chand achieved that too. He would instruct his trainees to watch carefully what he did with the ball in addition to what he explained with words. He gave great importance to observation and told them that by close observation alone they would pick up the tactics of the game very fast.

One of his methods of coaching was to keep bricks on the field, and make the players run with the ball and

control it in such a manner that it does not touch the bricks. Many times he would tie a cycle tire to a low branch of a tree and asked the players to hit the ball through that hanging tire from various distances to improve their aim.

Dhyan Chand always liked to be truthful and so he remained forthright. If he felt a certain player had no talent or potential, he would tell him politely. During one such coaching camp in Patiala, he once called out the Indian goalkeeper Shankar Laxman and asked him to stand in the goal-post. When Laxman took up his position, Dhyan Chand went to the top of the circle and said, "I am going to take ten hits from here. Let me see if you can stop any of the shots."

One by one, Dhyan Chand tossed the ball from one hand and hit it on the half volley. Laxman, India's best goalkeeper was unable to stop a single shot. Then again, as the chief coach, he was conducting a training camp for Women's hockey players. One of them, Leslie Cooper, a goalkeeper from Delhi, said, "*Dada*, I have heard that you were a great player in your time. I will stand in the goal and you try to score against me."

Dhyan Chand was a bit annoyed by this rude, arrogant and disrespectful behaviour of that girl, but he just said, go and stand in the goal.' After Leslie took up her position, Dhyan Chand, even at that age, shot six times with lightening speed from the 25 yard line into the goal. Leslie did not even know how those six goals

were scored. All her arrogance melted in a moment and she apologised to Dhyan Chand. He was greatly hurt by the behaviour of such young and arrogant players.

National Institute of Sports (NIS), Patiala, was the main training centre for various sports. The trainees of athletics, wrestling, volley-ball there used to feel fortunate to get a glimpse of the great Dhyan Chand. Once, some trainee wrestlers expressed their desire to play hockey. On being allowed to do so, they started playing roughly. Dhyan Chand called them and politely asked them to sweat it out in the arena of wrestling and become better wrestlers, as hockey didn't need foul play.

Dhyan Chand valued discipline and never tolerated any sort of indiscipline. He was respected as well as greatly feared for his strictness at the NIS, Patiala. When he accompanied the Indian hockey team in 1968 to Mexico Olympics as a coach, his team could not reach the final round and returned home with a mere bronze medal. This decline in the standard of the younger generation hurt Dhyan Chand very much and for many days he did not speak a single word with anybody. He was pained to see the young players taking hockey very lightly. He fumed, "There is no devotion for the game in these players and they lack the will to win. Indian style of hockey is now dead." His heart pained greatly to say such bitter words about the game of hockey that he had loved more than his life.

Dhyan Chand had now become a very sad person. The players and officials of the new generation had started to neglect him. At Patiala, a bizarre incident occurred when a petty hockey official tried to teach hockey to Dhyan Chand! This was the beginning of the ill-treatment that Dhyan Chand received which made him sad for the rest of his life.

However, he had some nice and memorable moments too in his later days. In 1956, he was given the great civilian honour of 'Padma Bhushan' for his supreme contribution of over three decades in bringing glory to India in the field of International hockey. He went to Rashtrapati Bhavan to receive the honour from the then President Dr. Rajendra Prasad. On that occasion, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, was also present. He made an interesting remark on seeing the many medals on Dhyan Chand's chest, "*Dada* Dhyan Chand, you have so many medals, please give me one so that I can also put it on and look like a player." Dhyan Chand replied politely, "Panditji! The rose looks the best on you. Only a rose suits you." Everybody including Pandit Nehru was impressed by this polite and apt reply. Pandit Nehru had great affection for Dhyan Chand. Even his daughter Indira Gandhi, who later became the Prime Minister of India, had always respected this great doyen of Indian Hockey. However, Dhyan Chand never took any advantage of his proximity to them for any personal

benefits, although after his retirement he was nearly on the verge of poverty.

The legend who won accolades across the globe including Europe, Australia and New Zealand, was at the receiving end in his homeland.

As there was no great media network in those days, Dhyan Chand's name had remained limited to the field of hockey only. Moreover, since he was never interested being in the limelight, many people did not know how he looked in person. Once he went to watch the National Hockey tournament in Ahmedabad, but was stopped from entering at the main entrance. Nobody recognized him as the greatest hockey player Dhyan Chand and he had to buy a ticket to watch the match. He continued to have such bitter experiences. He retired from NIS in 1969 and returned to his hometown Jhansi. Now he was getting old. His children had grown up and they were fond of playing. His fourth son, Ashok Kumar, following in the footsteps of his illustrious father, had started shining on the International hockey stage. But then it became extremely tough for Dhyan Chand to manage his big family of 15 persons. He did not have any personal savings and hence, he always remained worried about the education of his children and marriages of his daughters. Yet, he never shared his worries or sorrow with anybody and never requested anyone to help him financially.

21

A GENIUS FORSAKEN!

Dhyan Chand, who scripted the Golden Era in the history of Indian hockey, never put out his hands begging before anybody till his last breath. He lived his whole life in poverty. Despite being a legend, he kept himself away from publicity and stardom and didn't make any wrong move for earning monetary benefits.

Germany remembered the 1936 Berlin Olympic heroes who were alive and sent cordial invitations to all the winners of 1936 Berlin Olympic to attend the Munich Olympics in 1972. Dhyan Chand, too, received the invitation but could not go because he had then recently gone through an eye-operation. Similarly, Roop Singh could not go because he was seriously ill and had no money even for his treatment. He was in such pathetic condition that to meet the expenses of his

medicines he wanted to sell his gold medal and silver trophies.

However, at that time Dhyan Chand's son Ashok Kumar had gone to the Munich Olympics as a member of the Indian hockey team. With great difficulty he wiped his tears of regret for the inability of his illustrious father and uncle to attend the Olympics due to poverty and bad health. When it became known that Ashok Kumar was the son of the great Dhyan Chand, many German hockey lovers flocked around him. Once a very old and sick German came in a wheelchair to meet Ashok Kumar and said, "I am very glad to see the son of Dhyan Chand. I have seen Dhyan Chand's magical play in the 1936 Berlin Olympics. He was a marvellous sportsman. I can never forget his skill of controlling the ball and score goals even from very difficult angles." Ashok Kumar could not say anything. He was overwhelmed to see that even after so many years the people of a far away country still remembered his great father whom his own countrymen had forgotten.

The Indian hockey team could manage to win only the Bronze medal in the 1972 Munich Olympics. It was quite evident that the Golden Era of the Indian hockey was over.

During this time, General Cariappa, the Chief of Indian Army went on a visit to Australia. There he was requested to send Dhyan Chand to coach hockey in that country. General Cariappa then asked Dhyan Chand to

consider this proposal but the patriotic Dhyan Chand politely turned down the request because he never wanted to leave his beloved India. Many people felt that had Dhyan Chand taken up the Australian offer, he would have got a better treatment and his family would have been financially comfortable instead of rotting in poverty.

Roop Singh died in December 1977. This shattered Dhyan Chand completely. He himself was now fighting liver cancer amidst abhominable poverty. He was completely tired, both in body and mind. He was now eager to live this mortal world and go to meet his dear brother Roop Singh. On the other hand, the father in him was struggling for the maintenance of his family and his young children whose education was still incomplete. But now his health became precarious. Initially he was treated in Jhansi's local hospital. But that treatment was inadequate for cancer. For better treatment, he was taken to Delhi's All India Institute of Medical Sciences.

Against all the hopes of his family, Dhyan Chand's health deteriorated further with each passing day. He mostly remained semi-conscious and would mumble incoherently. He did not respond properly to anybody talking to him but answered questions about hockey clearly. Once the doctor attending to him asked, "Major Saheb, what is the future of Indian hockey?"

Dhyan Chand answered with a choking voice, "Indian hockey is finished."

"Why is it so?"

Dhyan Chand retorted, "Our boys want to only eat and make merry. They don't want to do hard work for hockey."

After this dialogue, Dhyan Chand lost his consciousness. He went into coma. All his bodily movements slowed down. The flame of his life extinguished at midnight on 2 December 1979. Delhi, the capital of India, woke up next morning to hear the sad news of his demise. Many hockey-lovers thronged the hospital to have the last glimpse of their hero. Dr. Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, the then President of India, sent the first message of condolence. Dhyan Chand's mortal remains wrapped in the National Flag were brought to his hometown Jhansi by a special helicopter of the Indian Air Force.

Thousands of people gathered to bid farewell to Dhyan Chand, the greatest hockey player ever. He was cremated at the Jhansi Heroes' ground while his regiment, the Punjab Regiment, gave him a salute with full military honour.

22

29 AUGUST: A NATIONAL DAY

When India got independence, there was a great debate about which game should be declared the 'National Sport' of India. At that time, due to great achievements made by the Indian hockey team under the captaincy of Dhyan Chand at home and abroad, there was a huge wave of hockey across the whole country. Even village boys of all states of India were playing hockey. The Government of India readily named 'hockey' as the National Sport of India because it had a glorious historical background. Thus, Dhyan Chand can rightly be called the 'Pioneer' of the idea of Hockey as India's National Sport.

The other countries of the world were honouring him like their own hero! His statue was erected in Vienna and his name was given to the main highway in New zealand.

As a mark of honour, the Indian Army had promoted him to the rank of a 'Major' prior to his retirement. Later on he was given the prestigious civil honour of 'Padma Bhushan' at the hands of the first President of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad on 6 October, 1956. Before him, this honour was not accorded to any other sportsperson.

After his death in 1980, efforts began to preserve his memory in some form. The first step in this direction was taken by the Government of India when a post-ticket was issued by the Post and Telegraph Department to commemorate his great contribution to India's glory. Again, this was the first time when a post-ticket had the face of a sportsperson printed on it.

Then at the Jhansi Heroes Club ground, where his funeral had taken place, a monument in the form of his half-bust statue was erected. Another statue of him, in which he is shown playing hockey was erected on the playground of the Railway Institute of Jhansi. The city of Jhansi is located in a hilly region surrounded by some hillocks. On one such hill, this full size statue has been erected, which can be seen from any corner of Jhansi.

But justice was done in the real sense to his extraordinary career in hockey in the year 1994 when his full statue was erected in National Stadium of Delhi and at that time, the then Prime Minister of India, announced the decision to declare Dhyan Chand's birthday (29 August) as the 'National Day of Sports.'

Since 29 August, 1995, this day has been celebrated as the 'National Day of Sports.' On this day every year, the best player of the year is given the 'Arjuna Award' and the best coach is honoured by the 'Dronacharya Award'. The Khel Ratna Award is named after Dhyan Chand. From 2005 onwards, the sportspersons of lifelong exceptional achievements are given the 'Life time Achievement' Award in the name of Dhyan Chand. Such posthumous honours accorded to Dhyan Chand have helped in keeping alive the memory of his unique and glorious career in hockey, which in turn has become a source of inspiration to the new generation of sportspersons.

The National Stadium of hockey is located in front of the historic 'India Gate' in Delhi. Dhyan Chand's statue carved out of black stone has been erected just at the entrance of this stadium. This statue not only symbolizes India's glorious achievement in hockey but also gives an inspiring message, 'Come, let us also play hockey.' In March 2002, the then Minister for Sports, changed the name of this stadium from 'National Stadium' to 'Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium.' This was the fitting tribute to the greatest hockey player of all times in the whole world.

Dhyan Chand's younger brother Roop Singh was also a great hockey player of his time, and later this heritage was carried forward by Dhyan Chand's son Ashok Kumar, a hockey player of repute in his own right. So

far, India has won the world cup in hockey only once in 1975, and that too by a lone goal scored by Ashok Kumar. Earlier, in 1972, India could win the Bronze Medal in the Munich Olympics only due to Ashok Kumar. Thus, Dhyan Chand's family is the only family in India whose members have won 6 Olympic medals! Of these medals, Dhyan Chand won 3 Gold, Roop Singh 2 Gold and Ashok Kumar 1 bronze medal. Dhyan Chand had planted the sapling of success in hockey and he witnessed that plant grow into a huge tree in the form of 8 Golden Victories for India in the International hockey. He was fortunate to see his own son bring the first World Cup in Hockey to India. However, he was equally unfortunate to see the rapid decline of the Indian hockey and loss of its popularity.

Due to Major Dhyan Chand, hockey did not remain confined only to his hometown Jhansi but by becoming the National Sport of India it is associated with the spirit of India. Just as a child remains connected to its mother by the umbilical cord, we are connected to the game of hockey, and Dhyan Chand, the pioneer of hockey, has become our idol. He is an example of how an ordinary person can become extraordinary and unique by sheer hard work, sincerity, diligence and total dedication to his chosen field.

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CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Full name	**Dhyan Chand Sameshwar Singh Bais**
Original Name	Dhyan Singh
Nickname(s)	Dadda, Magician of Hockey
Father's Name	Subedar Sameshwar Dutt Singh
Mother's Name	Shyama Devi
Height:	5 ft 7 in (170 cm)
Sport:	Hockey
Playing position	Centre Forward
Teams / clubs	Indian Army, United Provinces, India Jhansi Heroes Hockey Club
29 August 1905	Born in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh

1910-1920	Education, Still Six Standard
1922	Joined the British Indian Army
1922-26	Hockey confined to Army tournaments.
April 1926	International debut with India's successful tour of New Zealand.
1928	India won the hockey gold on its debut at the Amsterdam Olympics.
1932	India regained the gold medal at the Los Angeles Olympics.
2 March 1934	Appointed captain of India for the Western Asiatic Games.
Sept 1935	Toured New Zealand and Australia. Dhyan Chand scored 201 goals in Australia. After watching Dhyan Chand in action, Don Bradman remarked "He scores goals like runs in cricket."
1936	Married to Janaki Devi.
1936	Appointed captain for the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Lead India to a great victory over Germany in the final.
December 1947	Appointed captain for the tour of East Africa. Dhyan Chand scored 61 goals in 22 matches, at the age of 43!

1949	After a hockey career that lasted 30 years, Dhyan Chand retired from hockey.
1956	At the age of 51, retired from the army with the rank of Major.
1956	Awarded the Padma Bhushan by the Government of India.
1962-1970	Chief Hockey Coach at the National Institute of Sports, Patiala
3 December 1979	Passed away in New Delhi. (Aged 74)
4 December 1980	Government of India issued a commemorative postage stamp in honour of Dhyan Chand.
29 August 1994	Dhyan Chand's birthday, is celebrated as National Sports Day in India.
29 August 1995	The Sports Authority of India erected agrand statue in 1995 at the entrance of the historic National Stadium, Delhi
8 March 2002	The National Stadium, Delhi was renamed Dhyan Chand National Stadium
29 August 2002	Union Sports Ministry of India introduced a Lifetime Achievement Award in sports in the name of Dhyan Chand.

SANJAY DUDHANE

Sanjay Dudhane is a versatile journalist and prolific writer who has authored 27 books. He has published biographies of Bharat Ratna Sachin Tendulkar, Flying Sikh Milkha Singh, Boxer Mary Kom. His first book on India's first individual medallist Khashaba Jadhav has been published by NBT. He has written more than 1200 articles in various newspapers and magazines. He was the accredited journalist of Olympic Games 2012 (London), 2016 (Rio) and 2020 (Tokyo).

To commemorate the 75 years of India's independence, National Book Trust, India under the *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav,* Government of India programme has launched a new publishing series *India@75* for young and general readers. The books under this series will reflect the momentous, yet wonderful journey of India. As a part of the series, books on freedom fighters, major achievers and events/themes that have shaped the modern India are being developed.

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